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REMARKS  
ON A LATE PUBLICATION,  
STYLED  
THE HISTORY  
OF  
THE POLITICS  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN & FRANCE,  
&c. &c.

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BY WILLIAM BELSHAM.

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## REMARKS

# REMARKS

ON A LATE PUBLICATION,

STYLED

## *THE HISTORY OF THE POLITICS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE.*

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THE celebrated question, Whether upon Great Britain or France rests the charge of aggression in relation to the present bloody and destructive war? has been so long and so ably contested, that little, either in regard to facts or reasoning, for some years past, apparently remained to be added; and it gradually and silently gave place to the more momentous enquiry, in present circumstances, by what means it might with most facility be terminated. It was therefore a subject of some surprise when two octavo volumes were announced upon this exhausted topic, from the pen of a writer well known and justly esteemed in the literary world, which boasted to contain such decisive information respecting this point, as to leave those without excuse who

hesitated to acknowledge their perfect conviction that the criminality remained exclusively with the French Government, and that the conduct of the English Ministry was not only faultless throughout this business, but in the highest degree meritorious.

In a tone of arrogance, for which great authorities may indeed be pleaded, Mr. Herbert Marsh, the author of the work in question, tells us (vol. I. p. 218), "That though the number of those who were originally deceived was very considerable, at present every man who *chooses* to see must see their error." And again, p. 370, "That Ministers precipitated their country into a war with France, is an opinion which nothing but party malevolence could suggest." Having upon a variety of occasions stated my opinion fairly and fully, that the present Ministers *did* precipitate the nation into a war with France, and still retaining that opinion with the same unwavering firmness, after an attentive perusal of the chief speeches and publications which have appeared upon the subject, and last of all the publication of Mr. Marsh himself, I, and very many others whose mode of thinking is as little likely to alter on this topic, must expect to be consigned by this gentleman to that class

class of incorrigibles whose obstinacy and malevolence render them insensible to the clearest demonstrations of reason. In what light we, who consider the heads of the present administration as the grand and original aggressors in this fatal quarrel (for the French Government must bear its share of blame), may appear to Mr. Marsh, is indeed a matter of perfect indifference; but it is of consequence that we should clear ourselves to the public and to posterity. And whoever brings forward a charge of this nature against Ministers should be prepared to sustain it, not in the spirit of wantonness or caprice, and much less of "party malevolence," but in the strictest regard to truth, justice, and historical impartiality.

With this intent, and conscious of being actuated by no other motives, I propose to enter into an examination of the principal arguments adduced by Mr. Marsh in vindication of the conduct of the British Government, avoiding for the most part the discussion of those *minutiae* which occupy so large a proportion of the volumes now before me, but which serve in reality less to enlighten than to embarrass the question.

## SECTION

## SECTION I.

### *Containing Remarks on Chapters I, II, III.*

THAT in the month of August, in the year 1791, a conference took place at Pillnitz, in Saxony, between the Emperor Leopold and the King of Prussia, which terminated in an agreement or convention purporting designs in the highest degree alarming to France, is acknowledged. That these designs were not then and there digested into a formal treaty is extremely probable: and upon this point the declaration of Lord Grenville, in his dispatch of June 20, 1797, to Lord Malmesbury, at Lille, is sufficiently satisfactory. But, upon the decisive evidence of M. de Bouillé and M. de Moleville, it is certain that the project of the Emperor was nothing less than to form a league between all the powers of Europe, in order to compel the French nation to submit to such conditions as those powers might think fit to impose. The latter indeed pretends that the Emperor meant to effect his purpose by intimidation merely; but this

this account of the matter is too puerile to merit the least credit or attention.

To this league Great Britain, much to the honour of its Government at that period, and to the disappointment of the combined Courts, refused to accede; and in relation to this famous, or rather infamous, coalition, as well as in other respects, she appears to have acted a part rather friendly than inimical to France.

During the dreadful state to which the island of St. Domingo was reduced towards the close of the Summer of 1791, in consequence of the insurrection of the negroes, the town of Cape François being surrounded by an army of the insurgents, the most seasonable and effectual relief was afforded them by the generosity of Lord Effingham, Governor of Jamaica; and the British Ambassador at Paris notified to the Court of France his Britannic Majesty's approbation of this proceeding; which being taken into consideration by the second National Assembly, November 5, that body, so inferior in temper and wisdom to their predecessors, disrespectfully and petulantly passing over the message of the King of England, whom they believed personally and inveterately adverse to the French Revolution,  
voted

voted thanks to the English Nation, and in particular to the Earl of Effingham \*. On this occasion Mr. Marsh puts in a very extraordinary claim of merit on the part of the English Government, in not embracing so favourable an opportunity of making themselves masters of the capital of St. Domingo; and this *generous conduct* (p. 57), "than which," according to Mr. Marsh, "no stronger proof of friendship could be given" (vol. II. p. 200), he asserts to have been requited with the blackest ingratitude.

To the circular letter written by the King of France, September 1791, to announce his acceptance of the new Constitution, the Court of London replied early and in terms of respect and friendship; while Sweden returned the letter unopened, and Spain gave for answer that the act of acceptance could not be regarded as an act of freewill.

\* M. Dumourier styles the King of England "the Monarch in Europe the most enraged against the French Revolution." This may perhaps be true; but in proportion to the King's personal dislike of the Revolution was his public merit in conforming so far as he had hitherto done to the *existing circumstances*, which very strongly enforced the policy of acting upon the laudable system of equity and moderation.

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In November 1791, Sir Richard Strahan, Captain of the *Phœnix*, meeting with some merchantmen on the coast of Malabar under convoy of a frigate, determined to examine their sea-letters and certificates, as he deemed himself warranted to do by the tenor of the Commercial Treaty. The French frigate refusing to permit this, an engagement ensued and the frigate struck, after sustaining the loss of her captain and many of her men. Of this "act of hostility," as Mr. Marsh styles it, the Court of London complained to the Court of France in terms of great moderation. But when the note of the Ambassador was read in the Assembly, far from offering *satisfaction*, they passed to the order of the day—probably thinking that the English Court was in possession of sufficient satisfaction already. The inference Mr. Marsh is pleased to draw from this transaction, and which those no doubt *must* see who are not wilfully blind, is, " that it shows the English Government to have " been desirous to maintain peace, and the " French Government totally indifferent about " it." (P, 65.)

SECTION

## SECTION II.

*Containing Remarks on Chapters IV, V, VI, VII.*

ON the 31st January 1792, the session of Parliament was opened by a Speech from the Throne, penned in a truly pacific spirit, and even recommending some immediate reductions in the naval and military establishments, which accordingly took place. And Mr. Pitt was sanguine enough to affirm the probability of fifteen peaceful years in uninterrupted succession. Mr. Marsh speaks of the genuineness of the Treaty of Pavia as doubtful. It may however safely be pronounced spurious, and therefore it is wholly superfluous to vindicate England from the charge of having either actively or passively acceded to it. The disposition of the British Ministry at this time was unquestionably pacific; while, on the contrary, according to Mr. Marsh (p. 78), the inclination of the National Assembly was to involve themselves in a war by sea as well as by land.

The sole proof of this extraordinary assertion is, that on the 18th March Theodore Lameth,  
in

in the name of the Committee of Naval Affairs, delivered a report to the Assembly, in which he said "that about 80,000 sailors would be necessary in order to man the vessels now at the disposition of the state; and which the honour of the nation as well as the interest of its commerce does not permit us to reduce." The Committee further requested the National Assembly to take the speediest measures for the organization of the Navy. It might naturally be supposed, judging from the representation of Mr. Marsh, that 80,000 sailors were at this time actually engaged in the service of France; whereas M. Lameth meant merely to state, that completely to man the navy of France *in case* of a naval war would require that number; and no addition whatever was in fact made to the naval force then on foot\*. Indeed this would have been a strange time to have indulged their *inclination for a naval war*, with a land war in full prospect, when, according to the report of M. de Moleville, the Marine Minister quoted by Mr. Marsh himself *some pages before*, the French sailors were almost universally in a state of insurrection, and he even declared that he should

\* Viz. twenty-one ships of the line and twenty-eight frigates. *Vide REPORT.*

have

have found it difficult to induce any officer to accept the command of a ship of war.

No wonder then that M. Lameth should recommend it in strong terms to the Assembly, to adopt measures for the re-organization of the Navy. On the 20th April 1792, war was declared by France against Austria; on which great occasion, England still maintained its professions of neutrality, with the sincerity of which the French Ambassador, M. Chauvelin, appears to have been perfectly satisfied. "War," says the Ambassador, "is not agreeable to the taste of the Nation; preparations are neither made in the ports or the arsenals. It is certain that the system of neutrality *debated* in council was adopted there." So strongly were the new Ministers of France, M. Roland and his colleagues, persuaded of the favourable disposition of the English Nation, and even of the English Court, at this period, that the King of France was advised by them to write (May 1st) a confidential letter to the King of England, thanking that Monarch "for all the marks of affection he had given him, and especially for not having become a party to the concert formed by certain powers against France." The letter then proceeds to touch upon topics of the most important

important and interesting nature, and refers to the secret instructions given to the Ambassador. " Between our two countries," says the French Monarch, " new connections ought to take place. " I think I see the remains of that rivalship, " which has done so much mischief to both, " daily wearing away. It becomes two Kings " who have distinguished their reigns by a con- " stant desire to promote the happiness of their " people, to connect themselves by such ties as " will appear to be durable in proportion as " the two nations shall have clearer views of " their own interests. I consider the success of " the alliance, in which I wish you to concur " with as much zeal as I do, as of the highest " importance. I consider it as necessary to the " stability of the respective constitutions, and " the internal tranquillity of our two kingdoms; " and I will add, that our union ought to com- " MAND PEACE TO EUROPE."

Never was there a more glorious opportunity afforded of advancing to an height before unknown, and of establishing on a broad and solid basis, the great and permanent interests of mankind. Had the alliance so earnestly sought by France been acceded to with equal sincerity and good will on the part of Great Britain, how incalculable

calculable are the mischiefs which might, and in all human probability would, have been prevented; how immense the benefits which must have accrued! The idea is too painful to dwell upon. The specific answer to this truly noble and generous overture is not known. It appears only from the event that it was rejected, though probably in terms of respect and civility; for, in the course of the same month, the English Court issued, with the utmost facility, a proclamation, at the requisition of the Ambassador Chauvelin, to enforce the amicable stipulations of the treaty of 1786, prohibiting the subjects of England from taking out or accepting any commissions from the princes and states actually at war with France.

The famous proclamation against seditious writings appeared indeed nearly at the same time; but this paper, whether politic or impolitic in itself, was drawn in terms which ought not, and in fact did not give the least offence to the French Government. "If," says M. Chauvelin, in his Note to Lord Grenville on this occasion, "certain individuals of this country have established a correspondence abroad, tending to excite troubles therein; and if, as the Proclamation seems to insinuate, some French-

" Frenchmen have entered into their views;  
 " this is a circumstance unconnected with the  
 " French Nation, the Legislative body, the  
 " King and his Ministers. It is a proceeding of  
 " which they are entirely ignorant, which mi-  
 " litates against every principle of justice, and  
 " which, whenever it became known, would be  
 " universally condemned throughout France."  
 " Independently," continued the Ambassador,  
 " of those principles of justice, from which a  
 " free people ought never to depart, if any one  
 " is anxious to reflect candidly on the true in-  
 " terests of the French Nation, is it not evident  
 " that they must be anxious for the internal  
 " peace, and the stability and duration of the  
 " Constitution of a Country, which they already  
 " look upon as a natural Ally?" On the 15th  
 June 1792 the Session ended; when the King  
 renewed the protestations of his care to main-  
 tain the harmony and good understanding which  
 subsisted between him and the several belligerent  
 powers, and to preserve to his people the un-  
 interrupted blessings of peace.

So convinced was the French Government of  
 its standing, upon the whole, well with the  
 Court of London at this period, that the King  
 of France, by the advice of his present virtuous  
 and

and patriotic Ministers, ordered M. Chauvelin to present, June 18th, a memorial to the English Minister for foreign affairs, requesting the mediation of the King of England between France and the allied powers. "The consequences," said the Ambassador, "of such a conspiracy, formed by the concurrence of powers who have been so long rivals, will be easily felt by his Britannic Majesty; the balance of Europe, the independence of the different powers, the general peace, every consideration which at all times has fixed the attention of the English Government, is at once exposed and threatened. The King of the French presents these serious and important considerations to the solicitude and the friendship of his Britannic Majesty. Strongly penetrated with the marks of interest and affection which he has received from him, he invites him to seek in his wisdom, in his situation, and in his influence, means compatible with the independence of the French Nation to stop, while it is still time, the progress of the confederacy formed against her; &c."

After a lengthened and tedious interval of twenty days, that is, in the courtly language of

Mr.

Mr. Marsh. (p. 119), "of mature deliberation," the Ambassador received the following cold and repulsive answer: "His Majesty thinks, that in " the existing circumstances of the war now begun, the intervention of his counsels or of his good offices cannot be of use, unless they should be desired by all the parties interested."

But, as a most able writer and statesman remarks\*, "When *ALL* the parties in a war agree to desire the interposition of a neutral power, no friendly offices are wanted to bring them back to a pacific temper. Peace is almost as good as made, when *ALL* the contending parties are disposed to desire it. The obvious duty of a common friend, the true policy of a generous, or even of a prudent, Government, is to employ its good offices, and to exert its influence with those powers which may be less inclined to views of moderation, to encourage and promote a pacific disposition, to favour that party which seems the readiest to listen to reasonable overtures, and to make concessions for the benefit of general accommodation. Such were the wise and

\* Philip Francis, Esq. *Vide Question stated March 1798.*  
" honour-

"honourable duties of England, when his Ma-  
"jesty's mediation was solicited and refused."

To this admirable description of the functions of a mediatorial power, nothing need be added. It is not to be imagined that in *the existing circumstances* of the case, Austria and Prussia would have dared to refuse the good offices of Great Britain: but had those powers shewn themselves wholly obstinate and refractory, England had in recent instances manifested in what mode respect to her mediation could be enforced. The consciousness of our own strength should have inspired an openness and nobleness of conduct. The interests of Great Britain were evidently and closely interwoven with those of the Continent, which seemed to look up to England as the arbitress of its fate. But the genius of Mr. Pitt did not rise to a level with the proud pre-eminence in which he, his King, and his Country, were at this critical moment placed\*.

Still

\* A magnanimous statesman, it has been remarked, of first-rate talents, a Fox, a Mirabeau, or a Chatham, would most assuredly have acceded to the proposal of an alliance, and have given Law to Europe. A Minister of more caution, but equal in sagacity, a Walsingham or a Walpole, would perhaps have declined the alliance, but would certainly have accepted the

Still Mr. Pitt appeared to the generality of those persons who disliked some and despised other parts of his conduct, to be at least a prudent Minister, who would not lose sight of the peace and safety of the Country, if he did not, like his greater Sire, aspire to the nobler praise of wisdom, generosity, and magnanimity; but soon they perceived themselves in a fatal error.

### SECTION III.

#### *Containing Remarks on Chapters VIII, IX, X, XI, XII.*

ON the deposition of the King of France, August 10, 1792, orders were almost immediately sent to Earl Gower, the English Ambassador at Paris, and who had displayed much sense and discretion during his embassy, to withdraw from that city and return forthwith to England; therein virtually taking a decided part in the interior concerns of France, casting a stigma upon the conduct of the National Assembly,

the mediation. A cold and artful Minister, a Mazarine or a Sunderland, would have done neither, but, from a principle of self-interest merely, would have yielded passively to the varying impulse of existing circumstances.

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and dissolving the most direct and important medium of communication with that country at a time when the political relations of the two nations became more than ever interesting and momentous.

Whether the National Assembly were or were not justifiable in the measure of deposition, the English Government could possess no right of jurisdiction over them; and the political necessity of maintaining an intercourse of amity and good offices was at least as urgent as before. Louis XVI. was unquestionably a traitor to the constitution which he had sworn to defend. This is harsh language, but it is truth\*; and France probably was to be saved only by proceeding to this extremity. All beyond seems the result of democratic vengeance, and not of justice or even of policy. But what political merit had Louis XVI. in relation to England, that the English Government should interest itself in the perpetuation of his power? Mr. Marsh frequently refers us to the " perfidy" of the French Government previous to the Revolution, and in particular (p. 53) to the part which France

\* Vide Historical Dissertation on the Character and Conduct of Louis XVI.

acted

acted in relation to America. But was this the perfidy of the National Assembly or of Louis XVI.?

And in speaking of the request of France, to mediate between her and the Germanic Powers, Mr. Marsh exclaims (p. 121), " For whom was " England to take these effectual and decisive " measures? For a nation which has never ceas- " ed to be our mortal enemy; for a nation which " never saw the British Government in distress " without taking ungenerous advantage of it; " and at the beginning of the very last war, " which was concluded hardly ten years before " the period in question, had proved itself as " treacherous as hostile." But if all this be true, why incur any political risques in opposing the downfal of a Government which had shewn itself thus uniformly treacherous and hostile? Surely the new order of things could not be worse in this respect than the old. Since the æra of the Revolution, the National Assembly had taken every opportunity of courting the favour and friendship of the British Nation: and during the quarrel between England and Spain respecting the Nootka Settlement, they indicat- ed an insuperable reluctance to engage in hosti- lities against us. Of whatever private virtues

the

the King might be possessed, he inherited with the Crown of the Bourbons all the *political* vices at least of his ancestors: and Mr. Sheridan was perfectly justified in declaring, “that the Minister “ deserved to be impeached who should enter “ into a war for the purpose of re-establishing “ the former despotism of the House of Bour- “ bon in France; or should dare, in such a cause, “ to spend one guinea or to shed one drop of “ blood.” And, by parity of reason, that Minister would merit, if not impeachment, severe censure at least, who should subject this country to the smallest political inconvenience for the sake of showing respect or doing honour to the memory of that detestable and detested house,

But the recall of the Ambassador was necessarily productive of the highest political inconvenience. It was an unprovoked and flagrant insult to the French Nation, and it was by all persons of political discernment in both countries regarded as ominous of future animosity, contention, and war; occasioning as it did a mighty shock to the feelings of that high-spirited and gallant people, who carry to a pitch which borders even upon the romantic, their ideas of the point of honour. “The suspension of the “ King of the French,” says M. Brissot in his famous

famous Report of the 12th January 1793, " on  
" a sudden changed the apparent disposition of  
" the English Court. On the 17th August she  
" recalled her Ambassador, under the futile pre-  
" text that his letters of credence were address-  
" ed only to the Monarch, as if new letters of  
" credence could not have been expedited. The  
" Minister Dundas added, that this recal was  
" perfectly conformable to the principles of  
" neutrality adopted by the English Court, and  
" her firm resolution not to interfere in the  
" internal government of France. Nevertheless  
" the Ambassador was recalled upon the ground  
" of the revolution of the 10th August. Was  
" not this an interference in the interior con-  
" cerns of France, since it involved in it a pub-  
" lic disapprobation of its operations? If the  
" Cabinet of England had entertained a just  
" respect for the independence of the Gallic  
" Nation, an Ambassador would at least have  
" been sent at the opening of the Convention.  
" For when ALL the departments had named  
" Deputies to this Convention, it was evident  
" that a formal sanction was given to the pre-  
" ceding measures of the National Assembly,  
" and consequently to the suspension of the  
" King. Did the Cabinet of St. James's found  
" its refusal upon the abolition of royalty pro-  
" nounced

“ nounced by this Convention at the commencement of its sittings? We answer, that the Convention was invested with unlimited powers; and that it had a right to abolish royalty, and to substitute a republican government in its place. The Cabinet of St. James's could not refuse to correspond with the new Executive Power established in France, without violating the principle which she had herself proclaimed respecting the independence of nations; without declaring their determination to interfere with the internal concerns of France. Disdaining nevertheless these frivolous diplomatic chicaneries, and conceiving that the repose of nations ought not to be sacrificed to the miserable disputes of etiquette; hoping all things from time, reason, and victory; the French Republic ordered her Ambassador in London still to exercise his functions.”

Thus, while the Court of London plumed itself upon its moderation *in permitting* M. Chauvelin to prolong his residence in England, the French Government, loth to break with the English Nation, yet indignant at the treatment of the English Court, claimed with at least equal reason

reason equal merit, from her silence and sufferance under this unmerited affront.

In the instructions transmitted to Lord Gower upon this occasion, it must be remarked, that his lordship was directed to take especial care, in all the conversations which he might have occasion to hold before his departure, not to neglect any opportunity of declaring that, “at the same time, his Majesty means to observe the principles of neutrality in every thing which regards the arrangement of the internal government of France.” On reading this instruction, who can avoid exclaiming, Why then depart at all? If it were the real intention of the British Court to maintain its neutrality, why adopt a measure so invidious, and which must necessarily put that neutrality so much to the hazard? It seems evident, that the party so long and so well known by the appellation of “the King’s friends”—from the commencement of the revolution inveterately hostile to it, as to every species of liberty under every form—were now gaining once again an ascendancy in the Cabinet; and the recal of Lord Gower, with the declaration annexed, was the result of a political compromise, as fatal as it was weak and disgraceful.

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The French Executive Government upon their part, on this trying occasion, conducted itself with the utmost temper and wisdom. "The Council," says M. Le Brun in his reply to the official notification of Lord Gower, "hath seen with regret the determination of the British Cabinet to recal its Ambassador, whose presence attested the favourable dispositions of a free and generous nation; and who had never been the organ of any other than amicable words and sentiments of benevolence. If any thing can diminish this regret, it is the renewal of the assurance of the neutrality given by England to the French Nation. This assurance appears to be the result of the intention wisely reflected upon and formally expressed by his Britannic Majesty, not to interfere in the interior arrangement of the affairs of France. Such a declaration cannot be surprising on the part of a people enlightened and spirited, who first of all nations recognized and established the principle of the National Sovereignty: who substituting the Empire of the Law—the expression of the will of all—to the arbitrary caprices of individual wills, was the first to give the example of subjecting Kings themselves to that salutary yoke: who, in fine, hath not deemed "herself

“ herself to have purchased too dear, by long  
“ convulsions and violent tempests, that liberty  
“ to which she owes her glory and prosperity.

“ This principle, of the inalienable sovereignty  
“ of the people, is now going to manifest itself  
“ in a strong manner in the National Convention,  
“ of which the Legislative Body has agreed  
“ the convocation, and which will fix, without  
“ doubt, all parties and all interests. The French  
“ Nation has ground to hope that the British  
“ Cabinet will not depart, in this decisive mo-  
“ ment, from the justice, the moderation, and  
“ the impartiality, which have hitherto charac-  
“ terized her proceedings.”

But notwithstanding the hollow neutrality of words, contradicted by her own public act, on the part of the English Court, and the noble and magnanimous acceptance of that fallacious neutrality on the part of the Executive Council, the prevailing opinion in France from this time was, that England would ultimately join the coalition, and those who were really most adverse to the idea of a rupture with that Power thought it necessary to prepare the public mind for what they conceived to be so probable an event.

This

This they endeavoured to do in diverse ways :   
 First, By depreciating the power of England, and representing that, in consequence of her immense debt, she would not be able to exert her native force with the same effect she had heretofore done. Nay, that a war would soon bring on a crisis in her finances, and that a national bankruptcy must inevitably ensue. Secondly, By magnifying the discontent and disaffection which were known to exist in a certain degree in that kingdom ; and by plain intimations, and even assertions, that, in case of a war, it would be easy to excite a formidable insurrection in England, which would probably terminate in the subversion of kingly Government.

How far M. Brissot, and other popular orators in the Convention who used this language, credited these extravagancies themselves, does not clearly appear ; but the governing party had at all events an obvious interest in making others believe them. Truth however requires the acknowledgment, that there exists no evidence of their entertaining any agents in England with a view to excite public disturbances. They were probably deceived in a certain degree themselves ; they meant, from motives which appeared in

in their view highly patriotic, to go certain lengths in order to deceive others; and this, though by no means amounting to a justification of their policy, seems the most satisfactory key to their conduct.

But it is not easy in adopting a subtle and refined system to draw the line accurately and precisely. Brissot and his colleagues so frequently asserted "that it was the interest of France to "engage in a general war;" "that the revolution could be completed and perfected only "by such a war;" "that the governed must be "incited against the governors;" and "that "France for her own safety must set fire to the "four corners of the World," &c. &c.; that many were seriously of opinion that this ought to be effected, and the spirit of Jacobinism soon began, even under the Brissotine administration, which it shortly afterwards superseded and overturned, to appear very formidable. Many violently patriotic members of the Convention aspired to the glory of revolutionizing England, and from the combined influence of the causes so repeatedly stated to them, they thought little of the danger attending it; and there were those who hesitated not to affirm, that England was

no more to be dreaded than the Republic of Ragusa.

In this dangerous and highly fermented state of the public mind, the *Patriotic Societies* in England began the practice of presenting at the bar of the Convention addresses of congratulation, filled with bold, insolent, and seditious expressions, to which answers were returned in a congenial spirit full of respect and complacency. After the decisive victory of Gemappe, and the concomitant successes of the French Armies in Germany and Italy, the licentious enthusiasm of that democratic and anarchic body knew no bounds; and the famous decree of the 19th November 1792, granting fraternity and promising assistance to all those people who wished for Liberty, passed by acclamation. On the 28th of the same month, the president of the Convention, M. Gregoire, in reply to a seditious address from England, went the violent and extreme length of declaring, “ that the moment “ without doubt approached in which the French “ would bring congratulations to the National “ Convention of Great Britain.”

No sooner had this intelligence reached England

land than a resolution was taken, in the stead of reinstating Lord Gower as Ambassador, and authorizing him to remonstrate with energy against these extravagancies, which most assuredly would never have been committed had he remained in his proper station, immediately to convoke the Parliament and to state to *them* in the first instance, instead of the French Government, all the causes of grievance. The Parliament accordingly met December 13th in a most unusual time and manner, and every artifice was put in practice by the Ministers, and but too successfully, to excite a national alarm. Parliament summoned, no one could tell why—the Militia called out to fight, no one could tell whom—a plot against the Government, no one could tell what—an explosion hourly expected, no one could tell where—the Stocks falling, the Tower fortifying, meetings here, addresses there, sound and fury in the debates of the two Houses, Mr. Fox's counsels contemned, and Mr. Burke deemed an Oracle of Wisdom\*.

The

\* Those persons who are curious to know the *authentic* particulars of this incomprehensible plot, must apply to very high authority indeed. "The KING of ENGLAND," says Mr. Marsh (p. 224), quoting from the nameless author of a nameless tract, "knew the leaders, the agents, the societies, the correspondencies,

The Speech from the Throne contained a formal denunciation of the French, whose conduct had indeed by this time afforded just and weighty grounds of complaint. The Decree of November; the opening of the Scheld; the annexation of Savoy, in opposition to the pretended renunciation of conquest; the reception given to the English addresses by the Convention; were all legitimate subjects of reclamation and remonstrance. But neither reclamation nor remonstrance was made to the Government of France. As a measure of national security and

" spondencies, the emissaries, the periods of their meeting,  
 " their journies, and their resolutions. He knew that the plan  
 " was laid to seize the Tower, to plunder the arsenal, to break  
 " open the prisons, to pillage the public buildings and the houses  
 " of the rich, and to cut off at one stroke the several branches  
 " of the Constitution. His Majesty knew that the execution  
 " of the plan was fixed for Saturday the 1st, or Monday the 3d,  
 " of December. He knew where 20,000lbs. of iron lay in such  
 " a state of readiness, that in the space of six-and-thirty hours  
 " the whole could be forged into pikes. He knew what emis-  
 " sary, after remaining four-and-twenty hours in London, set  
 " off for the Hague, with orders to revolutionize Holland.  
 " His Majesty knew which of the emissaries warned his agents  
 " to take care, as the first attempt had failed, how they engaged  
 " in a second. He knew the number and names of the French  
 " Cannoniers," &c. &c. If his Majesty knew all these things,  
 he has certainly shewn himself not inferior to his illustrious pre-  
 decessor King William in the art of keeping a *Secret*.

prevention,

prevention, an augmentation of the naval and military force of the Kingdom was voted. The Alien Bill, the Bill for preventing the Circulation of Assignats, for prohibiting the exportation of Arms and military Stores to France, of Grain, and even of foreign Corn, through the medium of England, in direct and acknowledged defiance of the Commercial Treaty, were passed, being carried through their several stages by great and decisive majorities in both Houses.

These measures were not of a nature to pass unnoticed in the National Convention of France. On the 15th December, the principles of Jacobinism still rapidly gaining ground in that Assembly, a Decree passed, that in those Countries which are, *or shall be*, occupied by the Armies of the French Republic, the Generals shall immediately proclaim, in the name of the French Nation, the Sovereignty of the People and the abolition of all constituted authorities, &c. In the words *or shall be*, a strong and facile imagination like that of Mr. Marsh might suppose an oblique threat to England included (p. 317). The truth is, that the French universally conceived the confederacy, or, as they rather chose to style it, the conspiracy, formed against them to be in the highest degree base and unjust.

They

They regarded it, not without some colour of reason, as a war resolved upon for the express purpose of subverting the infant liberty of France, and of restoring amongst them the reign of despotism. The majority, therefore, thought they were fully justified in defending themselves as they could, and in repelling so unprovoked an aggression, by attacking their enemies in the part wherein they were the most vulnerable. As it was a war against liberty on the part of the combined despots, so on the part of France it was considered as a war against despotism, which was to be conducted upon principles totally different from those which had been known or acted upon in any former war; and if England joined the coalition of despots, they meant no doubt to class her as she classed herself.

When M. Baraillon, a *moderate* member of the Convention, therefore proposed, as Mr. Marsh states (p. 340), to restrict the meaning of the Decree of the 19th November to the Countries with which France was actually at war, *because* it had excited uneasiness in the British Government, the previous question was immediately demanded upon it, and the proposition negatived without a debate, as insidiously designed.

The

The conduct of the Executive Government was however far more temperate than that of the Legislative ; and, indeed, highly laudable, considering their circumstances, and the absolute necessity the members of the Council were under of conforming in a certain degree to the humours and caprices of a disorderly democratic Assembly.

M. Le Brun, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his report to the Convention of the 19th December, declared that there was nothing in the English Armaments which ought to excite alarm, since they exceeded by four ships of the line only the number which had been commissioned in the preceding year. And some days after, when thirteen more ships of the line were put into commission, he still affirmed that the force voted by the English Parliament was not formidable, *ne sont pas encore trop effrayans* ; considering, as he added, the difficulty of completing the crews of these vessels for want of mariners. He affirmed, “ that the Council had “ given express orders to the Minister, Chauvelin, to embrace every opportunity of assuring “ the English Nation, that notwithstanding the “ ill-humour of its Government, the French “ people desired nothing more ardently than to

“ merit its esteem. Also, that in case the armament, to which he had alluded, should be continued, M. Chauvelin had instructions to declare that a solemn appeal would be made to the English Nation.” “ An appeal,” as M. Briffot afterwards professed to explain it, “ to the reason and justice of a great Nation, duped by the tricks *charlatanisme* of its Ministers, and he expressed his surprise that the English Court should affect to regard it as an incitement to insurrection \*.”

\* Those who are conversant in English History, will recollect the “ Appeal” made by Count Palm, the Imperial Ambassador, A. D. 1726, by order of his Court, to the English Nation, for which he was justly commanded to depart the realm, as for an egregious violation of propriety and decorum; though the Court of London did not profess to regard it as “ an incitement to insurrection.” But on farther reflection, the governing Powers of France wisely abstained from carrying this very obnoxious and reprehensible measure into execution. It is also remarkable, that in the celebrated negotiation between the Courts of Vienna and London, in the year 1735, Count Zinzendorf, the Imperial Prime Minister, in conference with Mr. Robinson the English Resident, made use of the very same phrase, which gave such great and just offence in the mouth of M. Briffot, viz. “ That, in his opinion, the Emperor ought to set fire to the four corners of the World; and, if he must perish, to perish in the flames.” But every day’s experience, confirms the observation of SHAKSPEARE—

“ THAT in the Captain’s but a choleric word,  
“ Which in the Soldier is flat blasphemy.”

SECTION

## SECTION IV.

*Containing Remarks on Chapters XIII and XIV.*

AFTER an interval of no less than fourteen days from the meeting of Parliament, M. Chauvelin was at length ordered to break silence; and on the 27th December he presented a Note or Memorial to Lord Grenville, Minister for Foreign Affairs, which offered certainly a very fair opening for an amicable termination of the fatal misunderstanding which had now taken place between Great Britain and France. M. Chauvelin begins by declaring, “ That the “ French Government thought they gave an “ unequivocal proof of the desire they had to “ maintain a good understanding with the Bri- “ tish Court, by leaving in London a Minister “ Plenipotentiary after the recal of Lord Gower “ from Paris; and their dispositions having ever “ remained the same, they cannot see with in- “ difference the public conduct which the British “ Ministry observe at present towards France. “ The Executive Council think it a duty which “ they owe to the French Nation, not to leave “ it

“ it longer in that state of uncertainty into which  
“ it has been thrown by the several measures  
“ lately adopted by the British Government, an  
“ uncertainty in which the British Nation must  
“ share, and which must be equally unworthy  
“ of both. They have therefore authorized him  
“ to demand with openness, whether France  
“ ought to consider England as a neutral or a  
“ hostile power; at the same time giving the  
“ most positive assurances on the part of the  
“ French Government of its desire to remain  
“ in peace with it.”—“ Reflecting,” the Am-  
bassador proceeds to say, “ on the reasons which  
“ might determine His Britannic Majesty to  
“ break with the French Republic, the Exe-  
“ cutive Council can see them only in a false  
“ interpretation given perhaps to a Decree of  
“ the National Convention of the 19th Novem-  
“ ber. If the British Ministry are really alarm-  
“ ed at that decree, it can only be for want  
“ of comprehending the true meaning of it.  
“ The National Convention never intended that  
“ the French Republic should favour insurrec-  
“ tions and espouse the cause of a few seditious  
“ persons, or, in a word, that it should endea-  
“ vor to excite disturbance in any neutral or  
“ friendly country whatever. Such an idea  
“ would be rejected by the French Nation.

“ It

“ It cannot without injustice be imputed to the  
 “ National Convention. This Decree, then, is  
 “ applicable only to those people who, after  
 “ having conquered their liberty, may request  
 “ the fraternity and assistance of the French  
 “ Republic, by a solemn and unequivocal ex-  
 “ pression of the general will.

“ France not only ought and wishes to respect  
 “ the independence of England, but that also  
 “ of its allies with whom it is not at war.  
 “ The under-signed therefore has been charged  
 “ to declare formally, that France will not at-  
 “ tack Holland while that power confines itself,  
 “ on its part, within the bounds of strict neu-  
 “ trality.

“ The British Government being thus assured  
 “ respecting the two points, no pretence for  
 “ the least difficulty can remain, but on the  
 “ question of opening the Scheld; a question  
 “ irrevocably decided by reason and justice, of  
 “ little importance in itself, and on which the  
 “ opinion of England, and perhaps even of  
 “ Holland, are too well known not to render  
 “ it difficult to make it seriously the sole cause  
 “ of a war. Should the British Ministry how-  
 “ ever embrace this last motive to induce them  
 “ to

“ to declare war against France, would it not  
“ then be probable that their private intention  
“ was to bring about a rupture at any rate,  
“ and to take the advantage at present of the  
“ most futile of all pretences to colour an unjust  
“ aggression, long ago meditated ?

“ On this fatal supposition, which the Executive Council rejects, the under-signed would  
“ be authorized to support with energy the dignity of the French People, and to declare  
“ with firmness, that a free and powerful Nation will accept war, and repel with indignation an aggression so manifestly unjust and so unprovoked on their part. When all these explanations, necessary to demonstrate the purity of the intentions of France, and when all peaceful and conciliatory measures shall have been exhausted by the French Nation, it is evident that the whole weight, and the whole responsibility of the war will sooner or later fall upon those who have provoked it. Such a war would really be the war of the British Ministry only against the French Republic; and should this truth appear for a moment doubtful, it would not perhaps be impossible for France to render it soon evident to a Nation which, in giving its confidence, “ never

“ never renounced the exercise of reason, and  
“ its respect for justice and truth.”

Notwithstanding the rudeness of M. Chauvelin's language in relation to Ministers, this Memorial certainly contained great concessions, especially if we consider them as made voluntarily at the commencement of a negotiation, and when the progress of their arms had received no check. The offensive meaning of the Decree of the 19th November is formally and expressly disavowed. The question with a great statesman, if such an one had fortunately for Britain presided over her councils at this period, would doubtless have been, not whether the explanation offered by M. Chauvelin was a just interpretation according to the ordinary rules of grammatical construction, but whether the public and unequivocal disavowal of its supposed meaning did not indicate a real reluctance on the part of France to come to a rupture with England; whether she did not still wish to reinstate matters on the footing of friendship, or, if that were impracticable, at least of civility and neutrality. If France really wished to break with England, it is the grossest of solecisms to believe that she would have degraded herself—for in the light of a degradation it must in that

case

case have appeared to her—by such a disavowal. This pacific disposition is farther evidenced by her positive and voluntary declaration that she will not attack Holland, if that power does not violate its neutrality. Lastly, by professing to treat the opening of the Scheld as *a trivial question*, the Memorial furnishes a ready salvo for the French honour if the French Government should, in the progress of the negotiation, consent to abandon it.

The uncourteous and uncustomary language respecting Ministers is indeed reprehensible, and the oblique threat of appealing to the English Nation against the part adopted by its Government, or those entrusted to administer it, is equally impolitic and indefensible. The English Ministry were at this time, in consequence of their own previous indiscretion, involved, as it must be confessed, in a situation of great political difficulty; and the negotiation now entered upon was at once one of the most important and delicate that could be conceived. And never was there a minister less qualified than Lord Grenville to conduct and bring to a successful termination a business of such embarrassment and complexity; and which would have afforded full scope to the highest exertion of diplomatic talents

talents—to the address, the urbanity, the superior wisdom of a Temple, a De Witt, or a Bolingbroke. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> December the English Secretary of State returned the following answer:

“ SIR, I have received from you a Note, in which, styling yourself Minister Plenipotentiary of France, you communicate to me, as the King’s Secretary of State, the instructions which you state to have yourself received from the Executive Council of the French Republic. You are not ignorant that, since the unhappy events of the 10<sup>th</sup> August, the King has thought proper to suspend all *official* communication with France. You are yourself no otherwise accredited to the King than in the name of his Most Christian Majesty. The proposition of receiving a minister accredited by any other authority or power in France would be a new question, which, whenever it should occur, the King would have a right to decide according to the interests of his subjects, his own dignity, and the regard which he owes to his allies and to the general system of Europe. I am therefore to inform you, Sir, in express and formal terms, that I acknowledge you in no other public character

“ character than that of Minister from his Most  
“ Christian Majesty, and that consequently you  
“ cannot be admitted to treat with the King’s  
“ Ministers in the quality and under the form  
“ stated in your note.

“ But observing that you have entered into  
“ explanations of some of the circumstances  
“ which have given to England such strong  
“ grounds of uneasiness and jealousy, and that  
“ you speak of these explanations as being of  
“ a nature to bring our two countries nearer, I  
“ have been unwilling to convey to you the  
“ notification stated above, without at the same  
“ time explaining myself clearly and distinctly  
“ on the subject of what you have communi-  
“ cated to me, though under a form which is  
“ neither regular nor official.

“ Your explanations are confined to three  
“ points. The first is, that of the Decree of  
“ the National Convention of the 19th Novem-  
“ ber; in the expressions of which all England  
“ saw the formal declaration of a design to ex-  
“ tend universally the new principles of govern-  
“ ment adopted in France, and to encourage  
“ disorder and revolt in all countries, even in  
“ those which are neutral. If this interpre-  
“ tation,

“ tation, which you represent as injurious to the  
“ Convention, could admit of any doubt, it is  
“ but too well justified by the conduct of the  
“ Convention itself; and the application of  
“ these principles to the King's dominions has  
“ been shewn unequivocally by the public re-  
“ ception given to the promoters of sedition in  
“ this country, and by the speeches made to  
“ them precisely at the time of this Decree, and  
“ since, on several different occasions.

“ Yet notwithstanding all these proofs, sup-  
“ ported by other circumstances which are too  
“ notorious, it would have been with pleasure  
“ that we should have seen here such expla-  
“ nations and such a conduct as would have fa-  
“ tisfied the dignity and honour of England  
“ with respect to what has already passed, and  
“ would have offered a sufficient security in  
“ future for the maintainance of that respect  
“ towards the rights, the government, and the  
“ tranquillity of neutral powers, which they  
“ have on every account the right to expect.

“ Neither this satisfaction nor this security is  
“ found in the terms of an explanation, which  
“ still declares to the promoters of sedition in  
“ every country what are the cases in which  
“ they

“ they may count beforehand on the support  
“ and succour of France, and which reserves  
“ to that country the right of mixing herself  
“ in our internal affairs, whenever she shall  
“ judge it proper, and on principles incompa-  
“ tible with the political institutions of all the  
“ countries of Europe. No one can avoid per-  
“ ceiving how much a declaration like this is  
“ calculated to encourage disorder and revolt in  
“ every country. No one can be ignorant how  
“ contrary it is to the respect which is recipro-  
“ cally due from independent nations, nor how  
“ repugnant to those principles which the King  
“ has followed on his part, by forbearing at all  
“ times from any interference whatever in the  
“ internal affairs of France. And this contrast  
“ is alone sufficient to shew, not only that Eng-  
“ land cannot consider such an explanation as  
“ satisfactory, but that she must look upon it  
“ as a fresh avowal of those dispositions which  
“ she fees with so just an uneasiness and jea-  
“ lousy.

“ I proceed to the two other points of your  
“ explanation, which concern the general dis-  
“ positions of France with regard to the allies  
“ of Great Britain, and the conduct of the Con-  
“ vention and its officers relative to the Scheld.

“ The

“ The declaration which you there make, that  
“ France will not attack Holland so long as that  
“ power shall observe an exact neutrality, is  
“ conceived nearly in the same terms with that  
“ which you were charged to make in the name  
“ of his Most Christian Majesty in the month of  
“ June last. Since that first declaration was  
“ made, an officer, stating himself to be em-  
“ ployed in the service of France, has openly  
“ violated both the territory and the neutrality  
“ of the Republic, in going up the Scheld to  
“ attack the citadel of Antwerp, notwithstanding  
“ the determination of the Government not  
“ to grant this passage, and the formal protest  
“ by which they opposed it. Since the same  
“ declaration was made, the Convention has  
“ thought itself authorised to annul the rights  
“ of the Republic exercised within the limits  
“ of its own territory, and enjoyed by virtue of  
“ the same treaties by which her independence  
“ is secured: and at the very moment when,  
“ under the name of an amicable explanation,  
“ you renew to me in the same terms the pro-  
“ mise of respecting the independence and the  
“ rights of England and her allies, you announce  
“ to me that those in whose name you speak  
“ intend to maintain these open and injurious  
“ aggressions. It is certainly not on such a de-  
“ claration

“claration as this that any reliance can be placed  
“for the continuance of public tranquillity.

“But I am unwilling to leave, without a  
“more particular reply, what you say on the  
“subject of the Scheld. If it were true that  
“this question is in itself of little importance,  
“this would serve only to prove more clearly  
“that it was brought forward only for the pur-  
“pose of insulting the allies of England by the  
“infraction of their neutrality, and by the vio-  
“lation of their rights, which the faith of trea-  
“ties obliges us to maintain. But you cannot  
“be ignorant that here the utmost importance  
“is attached to those principles which France  
“wishes to establish by this proceeding, and to  
“those consequences which would naturally  
“result from them; and that not only those  
“principles and those consequences will never  
“be admitted by England, but that she is and  
“ever will be ready to oppose them with all her  
“force.

“France can have no right to annul the sti-  
“pulations relative to the Scheld, unless she  
“have also the right to set aside equally all the  
“other treaties between all the powers of Eu-  
“rope, and all the other rights of England or  
“of

“ of her allies. She can have even no pretence  
“ to interfere in the question of opening the  
“ Scheld, unless she were the sovereign of the  
“ Low Countries, or had the right to dictate  
“ laws to all Europe.

“ England will never consent that France  
“ shall arrogate the right of annulling at her  
“ pleasure, and under pretence of a pretended  
“ natural right of which she makes herself the  
“ only judge, the political system of Europe,  
“ established by solemn treaties and guaranteed  
“ by the consent of all the Powers. This Go-  
“ vernment, adhering to the maxims which it  
“ has followed for more than a century, will  
“ also never see with indifference that France  
“ shall make herself, either directly or indirect-  
“ ly, sovereign of the Low Countries, or gene-  
“ ral arbitress of the rights and liberties of Eu-  
“ rope. If France is really desirous of main-  
“ taining friendship and peace with England,  
“ she must show herself disposed to renounce  
“ her views of aggression and aggrandizement,  
“ and to confine herself within her own terri-  
“ tory, without insulting other Governments,  
“ without disturbing their tranquillity, without  
“ violating their rights.

“ With

" With respect to that character of ill-will  
 " which is endeavoured to be found in the con-  
 " duct of England toward France, I cannot  
 " discuss it, because you speak of it in general  
 " terms only, without alleging a single fact.  
 " All Europe has seen the justice and the gene-  
 " rosity which have characterized the conduct  
 " of the King. His Majesty has always been  
 " desirous of peace, he desires it still; but such  
 " as may be real and solid, and consistent with  
 " the interests and dignity of his own domi-  
 " nions, and with the general security of Eu-  
 " rope.

" On the rest of your paper I say nothing.  
 " As to what relates to me and to my col-  
 " leagues, the King's Ministers owe to his  
 " Majesty the account of their conduct; and  
 " I have no answer to give to you on this sub-  
 " ject, any more than on that of the appeal  
 " which you propose to make to the English  
 " Nation. This nation, according to that con-  
 " stitution by which its liberty and its pro-  
 " sperity are secured, and which it will always be  
 " able to defend against every attack, direct or  
 " indirect, will never have with foreign powers  
 " connection or correspondence except through  
 " the organ of its King; of a King whom it  
 " loves

“ loves and reveres, and who has never for an instant separated his rights and his happiness from the rights and interests of his people.”

Though it must be acknowledged that the interpretation of the decree of November, by the Executive Council, appears somewhat strained and forced, and that the comment, contrary to the general custom of comments, imports less than the text, it must, on the other hand, be remembered, that this decree was an effusion of popular exultation and folly; that it passed by acclamation in a moment of enthusiasm and victory; and that, with respect to countries which maintained the relations of peace and amity with France, it never had or was designed to have the remotest operation. Lord Grenville uniformly affects to consider the French as the original aggressors in the continental war; he makes not the least allowance for that perturbed state of the public mind which so singular and perilous a situation as that in which they lately stood must necessarily have excited; he puts the worst possible construction upon the decree; he takes it for granted that England was included in the scope of it; and refuses to admit any explanation which

might tend to remove or rectify whatever umbrage had been occasioned by it \*.

The impolitic conduct of England in refusing to recognize the provisional Government of France, so far as to continue the accustomed diplomatic relations subsisting between the two countries, was regarded by the majority of the Convention as a renunciation of the principle of neutrality, and an actual interference in the interior concerns of the French Nation; and

\* This famous Decree, in the original language, is literally as follows:

*Séance du Lundi, 19 Novembre, 1793.*

LE PAUX propose et la Convention adopte la redaction suivante: " LA CONVENTION NATIONALE déclare, au nom de " la Nation Française, qu'elle accordera fraternité et secours à " tous les PEUPLES qui voudront recouvrer leur liberté; et " charge le Pouvoir Exécutif de donner aux Généraux les or- " dres nécessaires pour porter secours à ces peuples, et défendre " les citoyens qui auraient été vexés ou qui pourraient l'être " pour la cause de la Liberté."

This Decree could not with any plausibility of construction be supposed to extend to England, which had repeatedly, and in the most flattering terms, been recognised both by the several assemblies and the Executive Government as a free Nation, particularly in the excellent reply of Le Brun to the letter of Lord Gower notifying his recall.

the

the English Government was in consequence treated upon many occasions, in that assembly, with great rudeness and indignity. This false step was therefore as soon as possible to be retrieved. M. Chauvelin ought to have been acknowledged as the accredited Minister of the French Government, and an Ambassador immediately sent to Paris. This of itself would have given a new face to things, and have produced a great sensation in the Convention in favour of England. But, on the contrary, Lord Grenville embraced with eagerness the present occasion to tell M. Chauvelin, in the most offensive terms, “ that he could not be admitted “ to treat with the King’s Ministers in the quality and under the form stated in his note.”

Instead of accepting, with magnanimous indifference to literary criticisms, the political explanation and apology of M. Chauvelin relative to the decree of November, as was the part of a wise and liberal negotiator, avoiding all retrospect and looking forward only to future arrangements of amity, Lord Grenville chose to avail himself of the petty advantage he possessed, in pointing out the real or supposed inadequacy of the explanation to the terms of the decree; putting moreover a most harsh and unwarrantable

able interpretation upon the explanation itself. He thought it expedient also to allude in the most invidious manner, in this moment of *amicable éclaircissement*, to the most invidious proceedings of the Convention—proceedings which he knew the Executive Council could not control: and what is most of all extraordinary, his Lordship declares that England must consider the disavowal of the French Government as a fresh avowal of those dispositions which she fees with so just an uneasiness and jealousy.

The opening of the Scheld being a secondary consideration in the present state of things, it would have been far better to have passed it over in general terms, reserving the diplomatic *discussion* of right on this topic to a season of more leisure and better temper. Instead of which, Lord Grenville urges his argument respecting this matter at great length, and in language the most irritating and insulting. And he sums up the demands of England in a tone of the most “insufferable arrogance”—“If France is really,” says his Lordship, “desirous of maintaining friendship and peace with England, she must show herself disposed to renounce her views of aggression and aggrandisement, and to confine herself within her own territory,” &c.

If this means any thing, it must import that France, in order to maintain friendship, or even to preserve peace with, England, must relinquish her conquests in the Low Countries and elsewhere: a proposition too extravagant to become the topic of serious deliberation. The conclusion of this preposterous letter, relative to the threatened appeal to the People of England, is the only part of it which can be read with approbation, and to this part it would be injustice not to allow the merit of propriety, and even of excellence.

In the mean time the violent party in France, fully possessed with the idea that a war with England must inevitably take place, kept scarcely any measures in the Convention in debating upon that subject. Even Monge, Minister of Marine, who had drank deep into the spirit of Jacobinism, on the 31st December, the very day on which Lord Grenville's answer was delivered to M. Chauvelin, sent a circular letter to the seaport towns of France, containing the following curious passage: " Le Roi et son Parlement " voulent nous faire la guerre. " Les Républi- " cains Anglais le souffriront-ils ? Déjà ces hom- " mes libres témoignent leur mécontentement " et la répugnance qu'ils ont à porter les armes " contre

" contre leurs frères, les François. Eh bien !  
 " nous volerons à leurs secours ; nous ferons une  
 " descente dans cette île : nous y lancerons  
 " cinquante mille bonnets de la liberté. Nous  
 " y planterons l'arbre sacré, et nous tendrons  
 " les bras à nos frères républicains. La tyran-  
 " nie de leur gouvernement sera bientôt détruit.  
 " Que chacun de nous se pénètre fortement de  
 " cette idée."

On the first of January, 1793, M. Kersaint, a distinguished officer of the Navy and a celebrated Orator in the Convention, proposed a large augmentation of the Naval force ; enforcing his proposition in a Speech much applauded in that Assembly. He said, " it was impossible  
 " for the Convention to remain longer indifferent  
 " as to what had lately passed in England ; and  
 " he attributed *the decided part* which the Go-  
 " vernment of that Country had now taken  
 " against them to various causes, and principally  
 " the hatred of the King of England against the  
 " French, and the fear he entertained for the  
 " safety of his Crown, which he considers as  
 " the sole motive for the interest he has mani-  
 " fested in the behalf of Louis XVI. The  
 " great body of Nobility and Clergy he supposes  
 " enter readily into the sentiments of the Mo-  
 " narch.

" March. The Minister Pitt he represents  
 " as wavering between opposite principles of  
 " action. By yielding to the desire of peace,  
 " he will be thought to abandon the cause of  
 " Royalty and Aristocracy: by involving the  
 " nation in war can he be certain," he asks, " in  
 " the course of events, of maintaining that pre-  
 " ponderancy which his rival Fox contests with  
 " him in the bosom of peace? It is," he says,  
 " an axiom in England, that the Minister who  
 " declares war never remains in office till the  
 " conclusion of it. Pitt sees in war the termi-  
 " nation of his authority. Pitt therefore would  
 " willingly avoid war; but the King is vehe-  
 " mently determined upon it—*veut la guerre*  
 " *par passion*. The policy of Pitt is to adopt  
 " the language of hostility, in order, by the ap-  
 " prehension of a maritime war, to compel the  
 " French to come to terms with their enemies  
 " by land upon the basis of his mediation." The  
 orator, indignant at this idea, then launches out  
 into a most eloquent display of the inexhaustible  
 resources and invincible courage of France, which  
 time has indeed fully verified, but of which he  
 says " Mr. Pitt has no conception."

He goes on to shew that in case of a war with  
 England they have in many points of view much  
reason

reason to hope for success. He particularly advertises to the situation of Ireland, which he says, " notwithstanding the late pretended emancipation, still groans under the weight of its fetters. The Catholics, who constitute the bulk of the inhabitants, find themselves still subject to the gothic and barbarous laws of the intolerant ages which produced them; and in this situation of nominal independence they seemed to turn their eyes to France, and to say, 'Come show yourselves, and we are free.'

Scotland he represents, with less justice, as almost equally prepared to receive them. "The Scottish Nation," says he, "knows its rights and its strength, and the principles promulgated by the French have found there very zealous defenders. Ireland and Scotland," he says, "will never consent to the payment of new subsidies for the support of a war, entered upon merely to prevent a people from enjoying the use of a river which runs through their territory, and which opens to England itself a new and better commercial communication with the Belgians."

To the grand question, how are the people of England disposed to the war in prospect, M.

Kersaint

Kersaint demurs. "Such," says he, "is the power of the Government in England, that it can do every thing: the commercial aristocracy are at this day the auxiliaries of the Court, and swell the clamour respecting our disorder, our anarchy, our weakness, and the disastrous events of those days which we wish blotted from our history. In a word," continues he, "can it be forgotten that the British Government made war upon its Colonies against the inclination of the British Nation, and merely to gratify the personal passions of the King? The inquisition of Spain knows no tyranny more artificial than the Government of Britain dares to put this moment in practice, and with impunity to mislead the opinion of the Nation." Upon a comparison of all circumstances, he pronounces it to be the intention of Pitt to prolong the negotiation until he had thoroughly awakened the ancient animosity of the people of England against them, and till he had secured by his intrigues a disorganizing party in France. "It is necessary then," said the Orator, "that he should know you do not fear war, and that the first cannon fired at sea will impose upon you the duty of affranchising Holland, Spain, and the Indies. Let him know that our tempestuous agitations

"tions resemble those of the Ocean: the surface only is moved, the mass of waters is tranquil."

After taking an extensive view of the war in which they are about to engage, he calls upon them, in the true spirit of republican heroism, to exert their utmost efforts in full confidence of victory. Nothing, he boasts, can hinder them from transporting 100,000 men in fishing barks to England; and in this way, he vainly predicts, must the quarrel be terminated—"upon the ruins of the Tower of London must the treaty be signed which shall regulate the destiny of Nations." In conclusion, he infers that they ought to be equally remote from the desire of provoking war, and from the fear of repelling an unjust aggression: and the whole of his argument is founded on the hypothesis that France is forced into a war which she would willingly avoid, but has at the same time no reason to view with apprehension.

On the 7th January, M. Le Brun, distrusting perhaps the temper of Chauvelin, wrote himself a dispatch to be communicated to the British Minister, Lord Grenville, breathing throughout the true spirit of political wisdom; and it was

looked

looked up to by the moderate party in France with fond and eager hope, like the American petition of PENN, as the olive-branch of reconciliation; and like that, also, it was rejected, in the same spirit of haughtiness and infatuation. It is as follows:

*"Paris, January 7, 1793.*

"THE PROVISIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL of the French Republic, before they reply more particularly to each of the points comprehended in the Note remitted to them, on the part of the Minister of his Britannic Majesty, will begin by repeating to that Minister the most express assurances of their sincere desire to maintain peace and harmony between France and England. The sentiments of the French Nation toward the English have been manifested, during the whole course of the Revolution, in so constant, so unanimous a manner, that there cannot remain the smallest doubt of the esteem which it avows to them, and of its desire to have them for friends.

"It is, then, with great reluctance that the Republic would see itself forced to a rupture, much more contrary to its inclination than to its interest \*.

Before

\* Because the Executive Council declared a War with Britain to be more contrary to the inclination than to the interest of the Republic,

Before it proceeds to such a disagreeable extremity, explanations are necessary; and the object of them is so highly important, that the Executive Council have not thought that they could entrust them to a secret agent, always to be disavowed. For this reason, they have thought proper, under every point of view, to entrust them to Citizen Chauvelin, though he is not accredited to his Britannic Majesty, but from the late King.

“ The opinion of the Executive Council, on this occasion, is justified by the manner in which our negotiations are, at the same time, carried on in Spain, where Citizen Burgoign was exactly in the same situation as Citizen Chauvelin at London; which, however, has not prevented the Minister of the Catholic King from treating with him on a Convention of Neutrality, the ratification of which is to be exchanged at Paris, between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Chargé des Affaires of Spain. We will even add, that the

Republic, Mr. M. infers (vol. II. p. 90) that, by their own confession, a war would not be contrary to its interest—and a war being *thus proved consonant to the interest of the Republic*, he further infers, that no doubt can be entertained of their intention shortly to engage in hostilities with England. Such reasoning as this, and of similar instances the volumes of Mr. M. are fertile, demonstrates that nothing can be so plainly expressed as to be incapable of perversion.

principal

principal Minister of his Catholic Majesty, when writing officially on this subject to Citizen Burgoign, did not forget to give him his title of Minister Plenipotentiary of France. The example of a power of the first rank, such as Spain, might have induced the Executive Council to hope that we should have found the same facility at London. The Executive Council readily acknowledges, that this negotiation has not been demanded according to diplomatic strictness; and that Citizen Chauvelin is not formally enough authorised. To remove, entirely, this obstacle, and that they may not have to reproach themselves with having stopped, by a single defect in form, a negotiation, on the success of which depends the tranquillity of two great nations, they have sent to Citizen Chauvelin credential letters, which will give him the means of treating according to all the severity of diplomatic forms.

"To proceed, now, to the three points, which can alone form an object of difficulty with the Court of London, the Executive Council observes on the first, that is to say, the decree of November 19th, that we have been misunderstood by the Ministers of his Britannic Majesty, when they accuse us of having given an explanation, which announces to the seditions of all nations, what are

the

the cases in which they may depend, before-hand, on the succour and support of France. Nothing can be more foreign to the sentiments of the National Convention, and to the explanation which we have given, than this reproach : and we did not think it was possible that the open design of favouring seditious persons could be imputed to us, at a moment, even, when we declared, ' that it would ' be doing an injury to the National Convention, ' to ascribe to them the plan of protecting insurrections and seditious commotions, which might ' arise in any corner of a state ; of associating with ' the authors of them ; and thus of making the ' cause of a few individuals that of the French ' nation.'

" We have said, and we choose to repeat it, that the decree of November 19th could not be applicable but to the single case where the general will of a nation, clearly and unequivocally expressed, should call for the assistance and fraternity of the French nation. Sedition can certainly never exist, where there is an expression of the general will. These two ideas mutually exclude each other : for sedition is, and can only be, a commotion of a small number against the majority of a nation ; and this commotion would cease to be seditious, if all the members of a society should arise at once,

either

either to correct their government, to change its form entirely, or to accomplish any other object.

" The Dutch were certainly not seditious when they formed the generous resolution of throwing off the Spanish yoke; and when the general will of that nation called on the assistance of France, it was not accounted a crime to Henry IV. nor to Queen Elizabeth that they listened to them. A knowledge of the general will is the only basis of transactions between nations; and we cannot treat with any government but because that government is supposed to be the organ of the general will of the nation to which it belongs. When, by this natural interpretation, therefore, the decree of November 19th is reduced to its real signification, it will be found, that it announces nothing more than an act of the general will, above all contest; and so founded in right, that it was not worth while to express it. For this reason, the Executive Council thinks, that the evidence of this right might have, perhaps, rendered it unnecessary for the National Convention to make it the object of a particular decree; but with the preceding interpretation, it cannot give offence to any nation.

" It appears, that the Ministers of his Britannic Majesty

Majesty have made no objections under the declaration respecting Holland, since their only observation on this subject, relates to the discussion concerning the Scheld. It is on this last point, therefore, that we have to make ourselves understood. ~~we may not only have every interest in the council to consider on no better notion than to~~   
 "We here repeat, that this question itself is of little importance". The British Ministers thence conclude, that it is, therefore, more evident, that it has been brought forward only for the purpose of insulting the Allies of England; we reply, with much less warmth and prejudice, that this question is absolutely indifferent to England, that it is little interesting to Holland, but that it is of

~~and loss of honour at the negotiation to do~~   
 When, in the course of negotiating, any circumstance admits of different constructions, if that which is most favourable is not adopted, there is an end of amicable discussion. The French Government had styled the opening of the Scheld "a trivial question," which it certainly was not; but their choosing so to consider it, was a strong evidence that they did not mean strenuously to insist upon their claim: but instead of taking this ground of advantage, Lord Grenville is uncandid and absurd enough to prefer the illiberal and improbable supposition, that the acknowledgment of the Council made it the more evident that it was brought forward for the purpose of insult. It is a moral and political impossibility, that any discussion can terminate happily where such perverseness of construction is allowed and indulged. There is, indeed, no warmth in the Letters of Lord Grenville; on the contrary, they are cold, haughty, captious, and malign.

the utmost importance to the Belgians. That it is indifferent to England does not even require to be proved. It is little interesting to Holland, since the productions of the Belgic Netherlands can be conveyed through the canals which end at Ostend; but it is of great importance to the Belgians, on account of the numerous advantages which they may derive from the port of Antwerp. It is, therefore, on account of this importance, to restore to the Belgians the enjoyment of a valuable right, and not to offend any one, that France has declared that it is ready to support them in the exercise of so legal a right.

“ But is France authorised to break stipulations which oppose the opening of the Scheld ? If we consult the right of nature and of nations, not only France, but all the nations of Europe are authorised to break them. No doubt can remain on this point.

“ If public right is consulted, we say that it ought never to be but the application of the principles of the general right of nations to the particular circumstances in which nations may be in respect to each other ; so that every private treaty which might violate these principles could never be considered but as the work of violence. We

will next add, that, in regard to the Scheld, the Treaty was concluded without the participation of the Belgians. The Emperor, to secure the possession of the Netherlands, sacrificed, without scruple, the most inviolable of rights. Being master of these beautiful provinces, he governed them, as Europe has seen, with a rod of absolute despotism ; respecting none of their privileges but those which were of importance for him to preserve, and continually attacked and destroyed the rest. France entering into a war with the House of Austria, expels it from the Low Countries, and restores liberty to those people whom the Court of Vienna had devoted to slavery. Their chains are broken : they are restored to all those rights which the House of Austria had taken from them. How can that right which they had over the Scheld be excepted, especially when it is of real importance only to those who were deprived of it ? In short, France has too good a profession of political faith to make, to be afraid of avowing its principles. The Executive Council declares, then, not that it may appear to yield to some expressions of threatening language, but only to render homage to truth, that the French Republic does not mean to establish itself an universal arbiter of the Treaties which bind nations together. It equally knows to respect other governments, and

and to take care that it may make its own respects: It does not wish to give law to any one; and it will never suffer any one to give laws to it. It has renounced, and still renounces all conquest; and its occupation of the Netherlands will continue no longer than the war, and during that time which may be necessary for the Belgians to secure and consolidate their liberty; after which, provided they be independent and happy, France will be sufficieatly rewarded \*.

“When that Nation shall find itself in the full possession of its liberty, and when its general will may be declared, legally and unfettered, then, if

\* Mr. M. has asserted boldly (vol. II. p. 113) “that at the very time the Executive Council wrote thus sentimentally on the pretended independence of the Belgians, it was fully determined to incorporate Belgia into France.” To talk or to write very sentimentally is, indeed, always a just ground of suspicion; and there can be no doubt but that the National Convention was as anxious as was ever Louis XIV. to annex the Belgic Provinces to the French empire. Great Britain was now, as at all other times, the great object in the way of Gallic ambition. The comparatively moderate party still held the reins of government in France; and, rather than involve the country in a war with the maritime powers, they would, most undoubtedly, have foregone this tempting object of national aggrandisement. The documents produced by Mr. M. only tend to confirm this conclusion. The question of incorporation was not determined by the Commissaries of Brussells, till the 3d of Feb. 1793; two days after the actual declaration of war.

England and Holland still affix any importance to the opening of the Scheld, the Executive Council will leave that affair to a direct Negotiation with the Belgians. If the Belgians, through any motive whatever, shall consent to deprive themselves of the navigation of the Scheld, France will not oppose it. It will respect their independence even in their errors.

“ After so free a declaration, which manifests the present designs of peace, the Ministers of his Britannic Majesty ought to entertain no doubt respecting the intentions of France. But if these explanations appear to them insufficient; and if we are still obliged to hear the language of haughtiness\*; and if hostile preparations are continued in the ports of England—after having done every thing in our power to maintain Peace, we will prepare for War; conscious, at least, of the justice of our cause, and of the efforts we have made to avoid that extremity. We shall combat with re-

\* It were, certainly, much to have been wished, that M. Le Brua had omitted this particular expression, as well as the former, charging the preceding Dispatch of Lord Grenville with warmth and prejudice; in order that the language of this excellent letter might have been uniformly mild and conciliatory: but without some slight expressions of resentment, he was, probably, apprehensive that this paper might be considered as too tame and submissive.

gret the English, whom we esteem; but we shall combat them without fear."

To this truly excellent, and admirable dispatch, Lord Grenville, after an interval of five days, returned the following extraordinary answer.

Whitehall, Jan. 18, 1793.

"I HAVE examined, Sir, with the utmost attention, the paper you remitted me on the 13th of this month. I cannot help remarking that I have found nothing satisfactory in the result of it. The explanations which it contains are nearly reduced to the same points which I have already replied to at length. The declaration of *wishing* to intermeddle with the affairs of other countries is there renewed. No denial is made, nor reparation offered for the outrageous proceedings I stated to you in my letter of Dec. 13; and the right of infringing treaties, and violating the rights of our Allies, is still maintained by solely offering an illusory Negotiation upon this subject; which is put off, as well as the evacuation of the Low Countries by the French Armies, to the indefinite term, not only of the conclusion of the war, but likewise of the consolidation of what is called, the liberty of the Belgians.

"It

“ It is added, that if these explanations appear insufficient to us, if you should be again obliged to hear a haughty tone of language, if hostile preparations should continue in the Ports of England, after having made every effort to preserve peace, you will then make dispositions for war.

“ If this notification, or that relative to the Treaty of Commerce, had been made to me under a regular and official form, I should have found myself under the necessity of replying to it\*, that to threaten Great Britain with a declaration of war, because she judged it expedient to augment her forces, and also to declare that a Solemn Treaty should be broken because England adopted, for her own safety, such precautions as already exist in France, would only be considered, both the one and the other, as new grounds of offence, which as long as they should subsist would prove a bar to every kind of Negotiation.

“ Under this form of extra-communication, I

\* Can any circumstance more strongly mark the folly of pride than the laughable dilemma to which the dignity of Lord Grenville is reduced, who still takes upon him to maintain that M. Chauvelin is not entitled to an answer, while necessity compels him to make a reply; and who in the very act of replying, affects to insinuate that M. Chauvelin is not to consider his letter as an answer?

think

think I may yet be permitted to tell you, not in a tone of haughtiness, but firmness, that these explanations are not considered as sufficient, and that ALL the motives which gave rise to the preparations still continue. These motives are already known to you by my letter of Dec. 31, in which I remarked, in precise terms, what those dispositions were which could alone maintain peace and a good understanding. I do not see that it can be useful to the object of conciliation to enter into a discussion with you on separate points, under the present circumstances, as I have already acquainted you with my opinion concerning them. If you have any explanation to give me under the same extra-official form, which will embrace all the objects contained in my letter of the 31st Dec. as well as all the points which relate to the present crisis in England, her Allies, and the general system of Europe, I shall willingly attend to them.

“ I think it, however, my duty to inform you, in the most positive terms, in answer to what you tell me on the subject of preparations, that under the present circumstances all those measures will be continued which may be judged necessary to place us in a state of protecting the safety, tranquillity, and rights of this country, as well as to guarantee those of our Allies, and to set up a barrier

rier to those views of ambition and aggrandizement dangerous at all times to the rest of Europe; but which become still more so, being supported by the propagation of principles destructive of all social order."

As this letter, though of no great length, is of extreme importance, it will be pardonable to criticise somewhat in detail the contents of it. Nothing being objected on the part of Lord Grenville, according to the observation of M. le Brun, to the declaration respecting Holland, the dispute is reduced to two heads: the Decree of Nov. 19th, in connection with the subsequent proceedings of the Convention; and the Navigation of the Scheld.

The English Minister states, that he has found in the paper remitted to him nothing satisfactory as to these points. For,

*First.* "The Declaration of wishing to interfere in the affairs of other countries is there renewed; no denial is made, or reparation offered for the outrageous proceedings stated in his Lordship's letter of Dec. 31st."

That the Decree, in its first and obvious meaning, was indefensible, is unquestionable; but as the

the Government of France thought fit to put a friendly, however forced, interpretation upon it, that interpretation ought undoubtedly to have been admitted. For, as the author of the excellent political tract, called "The Question Stated," remarks "When no act has been done, and when nothing but a supposed principle or general disposition is complained of, an express disavowal of such principle, and denial of such intention, ought to be accepted, because it is all that the case admits of."

To Lord Grenville's perverse and wilful misconstruction of the explanation, an admirable reply is made, and the examples of Henry IV. and Queen Elizabeth are happily adduced in illustration of the true meaning. But if a cavilling negotiator, in the spirit of a chicaning attorney, will not allow the persons with whom he negotiates to understand their own meaning, if he will obstinately insist that they are incompetent to explain their own declarations, what can any farther discussion avail? If continued, it must necessarily degenerate into disgusting and acrimonious altercation,

As to the complaint, that no reparation is offered for the rash and, to adopt Lord Grenville's

ville's expression, "outrageous proceedings" of the Convention, it may be fairly asked, what reparation the Executive Council had it in their power to offer? They knew they could offer none; they therefore passed them over in discreet silence, and any negotiator on the part of the English, who deserved the name of a statesman, would have wished to bury them in eternal oblivion. As England had no Ambassador in France at that time, the English Court could have no regular or official information of what passed in the Convention, and could have no regular right, therefore, to complain of it; and Lord Grenville would have equally consulted the true dignity of the King, and the true interest of the country, had he forborne all mention of those proceedings.

Secondly, "The right of infringing treaties, and violating the rights of our allies," his Lordship says, "is still maintained, by offering an illusory negotiation upon this subject," &c. It is true, that M. Le Brun entered upon an elaborate justification, or rather palliation, of the measure adopted by the French in relation to the Scheld, and that the apology, though ingenious and plausible, is founded upon very questionable and fallacious *data*. Certainly, however,

however, the right of Holland to the exclusive navigation of that noble river, if admitted, is a most invidious one ; to be vindicated only by an appeal to arbitrary and artificial restrictions, in contra-distinction to natural and common right, as it arises from the genuine, unperverted feelings of mankind. That the faith of treaties should be kept sacred is, however, a principle of such extensive utility and primary importance as to supersede all inferior considerations. England was therefore justified in making the opening of the Scheld, to the prejudice of her ally, a subject of complaint when called upon by Holland, though there existed no political necessity for her standing forward, armed cap à pie, the unsolicited champion of the Dutch in this abnoxious quarrel.

But the validity of the abstract reasonings of the French Minister is of little consequence. The material question is, what are his practical concessions ? He declares, that France has renounced, and *still* renounces, all conquest ; that she will occupy the Netherlands no longer than the war, and during that time which may be necessary for the Belgians to secure and consolidate their liberty ; and that they will leave

the Netherlands ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~occupy~~ <sup>occupy</sup> ~~them~~ <sup>them</sup> ~~without~~ <sup>without</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~power~~ <sup>power</sup>

the dispute relative to the Scheld to a direct negotiation with the Belgians.

An able statesman would have wished for no fairer opening for a general treaty. The terms on which France was willing to conclude a pacification, not with England only, but with Austria, were here made fully apparent. France was determined that the Low Countries should not again revert to the Austrian dominion; but she had not yet formed any design, at least any fixed design, of annexing them to her own territory. Considering the actual situation of affairs, this would have been a very equitable and advantageous compromise. Whether Belgia returned to her former subjection, or whether she was erected into a separate republic, was a matter of small import to England. In both cases, it must be English arms and English money that must preserve that country from becoming a province of France. And if England had entered with facility and good faith into this project, she would have had an unquestionable right to demand, and France, if sincere, could not have refused to give into her hands proper pledges for the EXECUTION of it. And

to this the whole attention of the British Ministry ought to have been turned\*.

Instead of this, Lord Grenville, under a form—as he takes care to insult M. Chauvelin and the French Government, by repeatedly reminding him—of extra-official communication, “but ‘not in a tone of haughtiness,’” declares that these explanations are not considered as sufficient, and that ALL the motives which gave rise to the preparations still continue. Two days afterwards his lordship informs M. Chauvelin, in a still more rude and insolent letter, that his Majesty would not receive his new letters of credence.

As the Government of France were not sanguine in their expectations of success in this ultimate application, a provisional order, dated January 10, had been transmitted to General

\* It is probable, indeed, that France, even at this time, would not have receded from her plan of incorporating Savoy with her own domain. But this was to England a very inferior consideration. It is moreover evident that the incorporation of Savoy was a spontaneous act on the part of the Savoyards, who, in fact, are Frenchmen and not Italiots. Whereas a great majority of the Belgians were averse to the project, and considered it as an act of violence and of conquest.

Miranda,

Miranda, who, in the absence of M. Dumouriez, commanded the French army in the Netherlands, to invade Dutch Flanders and the province of Zealand, in twelve days at farthest; that interval of time being no doubt deemed sufficient for the reception of the *ultimatum* of England. General Dumouriez, auguring early the ill success of the negotiation, was, as he himself tells us, desirous, some time previous to this, to obtain leave from the Council to attack and take provisional possession of the city of Maestricht, then defenceless, and which was afterwards attempted in vain. But this the Council peremptorily refused. Mr. Marsh is pleased (p. 362) to represent the order to Miranda, the execution of which was accidentally postponed, as an act of *perfidy* in the Council, though he himself offers the best defence of this measure by stating, " that the mutual obligations which at this time united the two countries of Great Britain and Holland made them really one nation." P. 364. It will easily be acknowledged, therefore, " that an attack upon Holland was," agreeably to his observation, " an attack upon Great Britain;" and " that a declaration of hostility against the British Government involved in it a similar declaration against that of Holland." Nay, it may be

be further allowed, " that this secret order was  
 " in fact worse than an open declaration ;" for,  
 as he gravely remarks, " an open declaration  
 " gives the attacked power at least a short no-  
 " tice of the intended hostilities" (p. 362),  
 which was probably the reason why the Ex-  
 ecutive Council preferred the former. But why  
 this perfidious Council did not commence the  
 war six weeks before, instead of commencing a  
 negotiation, especially, as we are told (vol. II.  
 p. 138), " that the French naval preparations  
 " preceded those of Great Britain by three whole  
 " months," Mr. Marsh does not think proper to  
 inform us. This gentleman, upon the whole,  
 however, concludes (p. 369), " that under the  
 " circumstances of the case, it would have been  
 " justifiable in Great Britain to have declared  
 " war against France in the middle of January  
 " 1793 ;" which is as much as to say, that  
 although the British Government had the fairest  
 possible opening for terminating all disputes be-  
 tween the two countries, and even between  
 France and the continental Powers, by an ami-  
 cable and equitable accommodation, and the  
 French Government had allowed twelve days  
 for the express purpose of receiving an answer,  
 the war would, under these circumstances, have  
 been, as all wars ever have been, in the style  
 and

and language of those who waged them, just and necessary.

It may be remarked that Mr. Pitt had, in the words of Mr. Marsh, the *condescension* to grant an interview, in the beginning of December, to an agent of the French Executive Government, M. Maret, whose deportment was found so much more agreeable to the English Ministry than that of M. Chauvelin, that an application was indirectly made to the Executive Council, that the whole conduct of the negotiation should be transferred to him. To this M. Le Brun alludes in his dispatch, when he says, "the object of the explanations required is so highly important, that the Executive Council have not thought that they could entrust them to a secret Agent, always to be disavowed. For this reason they have thought proper, under every point of view, to entrust them to Citizen Chauvelin, though he is not accredited to his Britannic Majesty but from the late King." It seems to be well ascertained, and agreed on all sides, that M. Maret was a person much better qualified than M. Chauvelin to have conducted a negotiation of this nature, and "for this very reason," Mr. M. infers (vol. II. p. 91), "that the Executive Council

"Council decided in favour of the latter?" But candour must acknowledge, that the Council could not, without a gross personal affront to M. Chauvelin, whose character stood high with the Convention, take the conduct of the negotiation out of his hands, and M. Le Brun thought doubtless that he had obviated in a great measure the inconvenience arising from Chauvelin's warmth, by taking upon himself the task of continuing the correspondence. Nevertheless, it is much to be wished, that the request of Mr. Pitt had been complied with, as the negotiation would in that case have been taken, as there is reason to believe, not only out of the hands of M. Chauvelin, but also, which is a consideration full as important, out of the hands of Lord Grenville: and the sagacity of Mr. Pitt, and the candour and mildness of M. Maret, combined with the real desire of peace which actuated both, would in all probability have brought matters to a very different and much happier conclusion.

The grand political evil to be avoided was manifestly the annexation of the Low Countries to France. The Girondists, who were now the governing party, were willing to forego this tempting advantage, which the Jacobins were

eager to seize, for the sake of preserving amity with England, and the chance of restoring peace to France. But they were equally determined with their antagonists, that these provinces should never more revert to Austria. When, at the end of January, at which time almost every hope of reconciliation with England had vanished, M. Danton formally proposed the incorporation of the Austrian Netherlands, it was still waved; but immediately after the declaration of war against England it took place, amidst the loud and universal acclamations of the Convention.

It was Danton who first pronounced the memorable words, " Les limites de la France sont marquées par la nature. Nous les atteindrons dans leurs quatre points, à l'ocean, au Rhin, aux Alpes, aux Pyreneés." In his style of terrific eloquence, speaking of the enemies of France, he said, " Vous leur avez jetté le gand; ce gand est la tête d'un Roi—c'est le signal de leur mort prochaine."

The harsh, forced, and perverse constructions which Mr. Marsh, throughout his two fatiguing volumes, abounding with declamation and repetition, puts upon all that was said or done on the part of the Executive Council, must be apparent

parent to every judicious reader. It would be superfluous labour, and would lead to fruitless and endless discussion, to enter into a minute examination of his innumerable fallacies and misrepresentations. Much must in every dispute be left to the judgment and understanding of the reader. If the principal points at issue are placed in a just and clear light, it will be easy to decide upon the merit of subordinate considerations. There is, however, one inference so unjust, and applied to a purpose of such importance, as to call for specific notice.

The dispatch of M. Le Brun was dated January 7. The impression which it might make upon the English Government was very doubtful. However anxious the Council might be for peace, it was necessary, therefore, to prepare for war: and on the very same day a Minute, or Resolution, was transmitted by them to the Municipality of St. Malo, which has never appeared, but of which the Conseil General of the Commune took the following notice, in their answer to the circular letter of Monge, printed in the *Journal de Paris*, January 28, 1793: "A l'instant où nous avons reçu  
 " votre lettre avec la délibération du Conseil  
 " Exécutif, en date du 7 Janvier, nous nous  
 " sommes

" sommes empressés de concert avec l'ordon-  
 " nateur civil, de lui donner la plus grande  
 " publicité par la voie de l'impression, bien  
 " certain que nos concitoyens seraient jaloux de  
 " prouver leur patriotisme, en entrant dans les  
 " vues du Pouvoir Executif, et faisant leurs es-  
 " forts pour co-opérer de tous leur moyens à  
 " anéantir les tyrans, et les hordes d'esclaves  
 " ligués contre notre liberté. Nous n'avons  
 " point été trompés dans notre attente, Citoyen  
 " Ministre ; et déjà nous vous annonçons que  
 " nos amateurs travaillent avec grande activité,  
 " à déposer les objets nécessaires à l'armement  
 " de six corsaires, dont trois montent 28 ca-  
 " nons en batteries, et trois autres plus petits.  
 " Vous pouvez compter, qu'ils seront prêts à  
 " l'instant où la Convention Nationale ouvrira  
 " sur les mers un nouveau champ d'honneur aux  
 " François régénérés."

Upon this Mr. Marsh observes (p. 155), " that  
 " it is evident the tendency of this paper was  
 " the same as that of the letter written by the  
 " Marine Minister, namely, to rouse the people  
 " to a war with England. The circumstances,  
 " therefore, that it was signed by the Exe-  
 " cutive Council on the very same day on which  
 " the Note of the Executive Council to the  
 " British

" British Government was signed, affords a new  
 " and very striking proof of that glaring dupli-  
 " city which characterises the rulers of modern  
 " France;" and " that the date of the circular  
 " letter of Monge shews, that the resolution of  
 " engaging in a war with England was formed  
 " by the Executive Council even before they  
 " knew the conditions under which the British  
 " Government was willing to preserve peace  
 " with France, and consequently that they were  
 " determined upon a rupture at all events."  
 Were the French then to make no preparations  
 for war, nor to offer any incitements to the na-  
 tional ardour in the full prospect of a war, mere-  
 ly because they were engaged in a negotiation  
 for peace? Is it fair or just to style that hypo-  
 crisy in France which, in any other nation, would  
 be regarded as the result of prudence, or indeed  
 rather of common sense? Did England remit  
 her hostile preparations during this interval?  
 Did she not, on the contrary, declare in positive  
 terms that she would not discontinue them?  
 " When a man, however respectable, suffers his  
 prejudices to carry him to such lengths of party  
 zeal—for party malevolence is a phrase of odious  
 sound—it is necessary to read with extreme  
 caution whatever he may write, and to credit  
 rather what he shall prove than what he shall say." *A good*

Mr.

*Motto for this Pamphlet.*

Mr. Marsh mentions (p. 158), as an additional proof, that " the Executive Council was resolved, at all events, on a war with England, and that the negotiation which was then carrying on had no other object than to amuse its Government, that General Dumouriez informed General Miranda in a letter, dated Paris, January 10, that the war between England and France appeared to be decided. He said indeed to Miranda, *decided on the part of England*, being too prudent to betray the secrets of the Executive Council." This forced and far-fetched proof rests upon the subsequent assertion of Dumouriez in his Memoirs (tome I. p. 103), " that it would have been extremely easy for France to have avoided a war with England ;" consequently, the disposition of England must have been pacific ; consequently, France must have been the power that decided for war ; consequently, France must have been insincere when negotiating for peace. But this is a mere wire-drawn conclusion of Mr. Marsh ; for Dumouriez never represents France as insincere in her attempts to effect an accommodation — though he expressly charges Mr. Pitt with duplicity as to the negotiation in which he himself was concerned. " On pourrait croire que le Ministre Pitt," says he, " n'auroit " voulu

“ voulu qu’amuser le General Dumouriez.” Had France uniformly acted upon a system of moderation and discretion, it would indeed have been extremely easy, as M. Dumouriez justly affirms, to have avoided a war with England. But when the anger and resentment of England were carried to so extravagant a pitch that they could be appeased only, on the part of France, by relinquishing all her conquests, and rescinding all her decrees, France could not avoid a war with England, without leaving herself completely at the mercy of her enemies.

Also from a most virulent, insolent, and frantic speech uttered by the demagogue Carra, in the Convention, January 2, in which the Government of England and even the person of the Monarch was scandalously villified, Mr. Marsh infers (p. 181), “ That the whole world might perceive that it was not the object of the National Convention to produce a reconciliation with the British Cabinet.” As well might it have been inferred from the furious invective of Mr. Burke in the British House of Commons, February 1790, that the British parliament had, at that period, determined upon a rupture with France.

The  
LADY

The famous speech of M. Brissot on presenting his report from the United Committees of Foreign Affairs, Marine, and General Defence, January 12, Mr. Marsh considers as an additional evidence of his favourite, and often repeated assertion, "That the French were determined "at all events to engage in a war with England." As M. Brissot was, at this period, in the zenith of his popularity and influence, it will not be improper to transcribe a few of the most remarkable passages of his speech on this great occasion, in order to assist us in forming a judgment of the real views and intentions of the governing party in France.

M. Brissot begins by declaring, "That, after "a profound discussion, it is the opinion of the "United Committee, *First*, That the complaints "of the British Cabinet against France have no "just foundation\*; *Secondly*, That the Republic of France, on the contrary, has various

\* That this was contrary to the real opinion of M. Brissot appears from his address to his Constituents, in which he speaks of the Decree of the 19th November, and the subsequent proceedings of the Convention, in terms of severe reprobation. But such was the homage he was obliged to pay to the tyrannical humours and capricious insolence of an Anarchic Assembly.

" well

“ well founded grounds of complaint against the  
“ Court of St. James’s; *Thirdly*, That after all  
“ means of conciliation have been tried, the ag-  
“ gressions of England were to be vigorously re-  
“ pelled.”

The orator remarks, “ That the Nation, the  
“ Parliament, and the Court, were very differ-  
“ ently affected by the French Revolution: the  
“ first received the intelligence of it with joy,  
“ the second with uneasiness, the third with  
“ terror. The voice of the Nation compelled  
“ the Ministers to keep silence; the interests of  
“ their Country and their own interest induced  
“ them to an exact neutrality, which they had,  
“ in fact, maintained previous to the immortal  
“ day of the 10th of August. The deposition  
“ of the King, changed on a sudden the dispo-  
“ sition of the Court of England; and on the  
“ 17th of August she recalled her Ambassador,  
“ under the futile pretext that his letters of cre-  
“ dence were addressed to the late Monarch.  
“ Disdaining diplomatic chicaneries, France or-  
“ dered her Ambassador in London to continue  
“ the exercise of his functions. The victories  
“ of the French armies appeared gradually to  
“ calm the scruples of the Cabinet of St. James’s.  
“ The English Minister was desirous to know  
“ of

" of the Ambassador what was the ultimate intention of the French: and the Executive Council answered his enquiries with the dignity and moderation which ought to characterize a free people. An amicable intercourse was established between the two Nations during the months of October and November, during which no mention was made of the opening of the Scheld; but the English Ministry fearing for the safety of Holland, received assurances from the Executive Council the most proper to tranquillize their minds.

" The English Minister complained of the Decree of November, which appeared to their apprehension calculated to excite all people to revolt, and to promise an efficacious succour to the first seditious attempt in England, and the Executive Council gave upon this head such explanations as were entirely conformable to the desires of the Court of London.

" In a word, such was the disposition of the British Cabinet towards the end of the month of November, that all difficulties seemed insensibly to vanish. Lord Grenville began to recognise that as a Government of France, which he had at first entitled the Government

" of

“ of Paris. They still affected scruples indeed  
 “ as to the character of our Ambassador, whom  
 “ they would not acknowledge as authorised,  
 “ although they gave and courted explanations  
 “ —*Tandis qu'on provoquait et qu'on donnait des*  
 “ *explications.*” Pitt, on his side, declared in  
 “ the beginning of December his desire of avoid-  
 “ ing war, and he regretted that the interrup-  
 “ tion of the correspondence of the two Cabi-  
 “ nets produced mistakes of each other's mean-  
 “ ing—*Des mal entendus.*

“ On a sudden the scene changes. The King  
 “ of England, by two proclamations, convenes  
 “ the Parliament, and embodies the Militia;  
 “ causes troops to march towards London, and  
 “ fortifies the Tower.

“ The effect of these measures surpassed even  
 “ the hopes of the Ministers. It sufficed to  
 “ sound the *tocfin* of alarm, and the *Gazettes* of  
 “ the Court overflowed with protestations of at-  
 “ tachment to the English Constitution, and of  
 “ horror for the French Revolution.

“ The public mind was in this paroxysm of  
 “ agitation when the Parliament met. Under  
 “ the

“ the veil of attachment to the Constitution all  
“ the hypocrisy of aristocracy displayed itself.  
“ Part of the members of the opposition did  
“ not blush to prostitute themselves to a corrupt  
“ ministry, and to burn incense before the idol  
“ of the day.

“ In the midst of the panic terror which seized  
“ almost all men, Fox merits praise for daring  
“ to propose the measure of sending an  
“ Ambassador to France. The Minister, sure of  
“ the suffrages of the Parliament in support of a  
“ war with France, appeared eager to revive  
“ the old chicaneries respecting the invasion of  
“ Holland and the Decree of the 19th November.  
“ He even began to speak of the Scheld,  
“ but above all he displayed more stiffness  
“ (roideur) towards your agents, more haughtiness  
“ in his communications.

“ In these circumstances the Executive Council, by the organ of your Ambassador, caused  
“ a notification in writing to be made to the  
“ English Government, confuting all the accusations charged upon the French, complain-  
“ ing of the hostile preparations of the Court  
“ of London, and announcing its firm resolution  
“ to

“ to open by an appeal to the Public the eyes  
 “ of the Nation, and to take every necessary  
 “ measure to repel aggression.

“ You have heard the reply of Lord Gren-  
 ville to this note of M. Chauvelin. Cavilling  
 “ upoh the title of the Ambassador, confused  
 “ entortillage as to explications, insidious in the  
 “ eternal repetition of complaints worn thread-  
 “ bare—this is all which can be discovered.

“ The opening of the Scheld was the first  
 “ grievance of the English Cabinet. We will  
 “ not deny that the opening of the Scheld is  
 “ contrary to the treaty of Utrecht and various  
 “ subsequent conventions. But in restoring Bel-  
 “ gium to liberty, can the French Republic vio-  
 “ late those principles of eternal justice which  
 “ have guided her arms?”

As to the Decree of the 19th of November, he says, “ How can it be thought that a Nation  
 “ professing a reverential respect for the rights  
 “ of the people can be the protectors of sedition?  
 “ A free people know how to distinguish resist-  
 “ ance from rebellion; the will ascertained of a  
 “ great majority from the partial will of a few  
 “ individuals. To protect the few against the  
 “ many

" many is to protect revolt; it is to be unjust,  
 " and a free people know not how to be un-  
 " just, &c.

" Shall I recal the great crime committed by  
 " the Convention in receiving the address of di-  
 " vers Societies in England, as if the inhabi-  
 " tants of that Country had no right to rejoice  
 " in the revolution of a neighbouring people  
 " who had recovered their liberty.

" Not only would not the English Minister  
 " deign to send us an Ambassador, but he re-  
 " fused to acknowledge ours. The Republic of  
 " France without doubt exists, and for the con-  
 " tinuance of her existence she does not ask for  
 " any foreign permission. But she may perhaps  
 " examine in her turn whether it is proper to  
 " recognise those Kings who so insolently re-  
 " fused to acknowledge her as a Republic."

After expatiating on the political injustice of  
 the Alien, Assignat, and Corn Bills, recently  
 passed by the British Parliament in direct viola-  
 tion of the commercial treaty, while they accuse  
 the French as the violators of all treaties, he af-  
 firms " that laying all circumstances together,  
 " it is difficult not to conclude that the Cabinet  
 " of

" of St. James's, wear of its neutrality, is resolved  
 " to take an active part in the coalition which  
 " has sworn our ruin. Every thing," says this  
 democratic orator, " combines to enforce this  
 conviction on the mind. The pride of that  
 Monarch who has so long deplored the igno-  
 miny into which royalty has fallen; and from  
 whose breast the event of the American war  
 has not eradicated the fatal inclination of  
 once more combating the spirit of freedom;  
 the detestation entertained for liberty by that  
 Lord Hawkesbury, who behind the curtain  
 directs his master, the council, and the cor-  
 rupt majority of Parliament; the feeble resist-  
 ance of Pitt and his colleagues, who no longer  
 oppose the war since it has become popular;  
 the blindness of the Nation, and the universal  
 hope of crushing France, judging as they do  
 from false and exaggerated pictures, and be-  
 lieving her plunged in anarchy, without ma-  
 rine, money, or resources.

" On the other hand, can we believe that  
 these demonstrations of war should be serious  
 on the part of the English Ministry, when so  
 many motives are discoverable which ought  
 to deter them from it; when it is evident that  
 there exists no solid motive to induce them to  
 " it,

" it, that those which are alleged are miserable  
 " chicaneries, that it is impossible to deceive  
 " the English Nation for any length of time, or  
 " to persuade her that she ought to expend mil-  
 " lions to bar the navigation of the Scheld, or  
 " to obtain an explanation of a Decree which  
 " has been already explained; when they see  
 " that war will destroy their commerce which  
 " is now so flourishing; when the enormous  
 " debt of Great Britain is considered, so that  
 " it is impossible to discover a single new article  
 " of taxation; when war even the most fortu-  
 " nate is productive of oppression, and when in  
 " present circumstances it is but a single step  
 " from national discontent to national revolu-  
 " tion?—When we combine all these circum-  
 " stances, we shall be tempted to regard this  
 " war as a war of prepartives; but under  
 " that aspect it is more fatal for us than war  
 " open and declared."

The orator then attempts to demonstrate that France will enter upon such a war in all respects to more advantage than England. He advances divers weak and futile arguments to prove that the finances of England are totally exhausted—arguments no less foolish and fallacious than those since employed by Mr. Pitt to prove

France

France to be not merely on the verge, but in the gulf of bankruptcy; and he adduces as a decisive evidence of the extreme distress of the English Treasury, *the fact* that the Minister was obliged to degrade himself so far as to *rob* the Bank of England of half a million of dividends belonging to different unknown proprietors.

He says that England cannot man her Navy without having recourse to the infamous expedient of pressing, which, he asserts, will occasion an instant and general insurrection.

After a long enumeration of circumstances, according to the representation of this speaker, highly flattering to France and alarming to England, he concludes, " That there is nothing to apprehend from the junction of England to the rest of their enemies.—What you have to fear," says he " is not war, but incertitude. You ought then to require an explicit declaration; and if you cannot obtain it, you must resolve on war. Say to the English Nation, ' The war that your Cabinet meditates against us, is a war impious, fratricidal, and such as we hold in horror. To live in peace with you is our sole desire. We respect your rights and those of your allies. Respect in return

" our principles. If you have any inquietudes,  
 " we are ready to dissipate them. But if you  
 " have the weakness to obey the perfidious im-  
 " pulses of your Ministers, if you will lend  
 " your hands to carry on the combats which  
 " they are preparing, then we declare it to you  
 " with grief we can see in you only cruel ene-  
 " mies, brethren of those Satellites of Austria  
 " of whom we have sworn the destruction."

In the general tenor of this famous report, the language of which is for the most part inflated, and the sentiments romantic and extravagant, there is nothing which can lead us to suppose that a war with England was a favourite object with M. Brissot. Far from it. He seems perplexed at the sudden change which had taken place in the English Counsels, and inclined to believe that a war must, in consequence of that change, sooner or later, unavoidably ensue. In the prospect of it he endeavours to awaken all the ardour, the genius, and spirit of his countrymen, in order to animate them to engage in this unlooked-for and arduous contest; and he indulges, or professes to indulge, sanguine expectations of a favourable result from the several circumstances which, in the course of his speech, he expatiates upon; but that he was

desirous

desirous to make the experiment, there exists no shadow of proof, no symptom of probability\*.

There is a remarkable concession in this speech of M. Brissot, with relation to Holland, which ought not to be passed over in silence. Speaking of the apprehensions of the British Government respecting the safety of the United Provinces, he says, " L'aggression du Stathouder envers la France, ou l'insurrection contre lui de la majorité des Hollandois, voilà les seuls cas où la France croirait de son devoir et de sa justice de porter les armes dans de Provinces-Unies : et ces cas n'existent point, et la France en ce veut rester tranquille." This is an honourable testimony in favour of the Dutch Government ; and the only ground upon which the subsequent invasion of Holland could be plausibly vindicated was, that the reciprocal engagements between that country and Great Britain were so close, and intimate, that, as Mr. Marsh himself acknowledges, the two nations, in a political view, could only be considered as one. But English friendship and protection were so

\* *Vide* the remarkable declaration of M. Brissot, mentioned by the author of the tract, **UTRAQUAM HORUM**, p. 43.

fatal to the Stadholder, that he might well be allowed to exclaim :

—“*Pol! me occidistis amici, non servastis.*”—

It is, however, too evident, that neither the opening of the Scheld, nor the apprehension of the invasion of Holland, nor the Decree of the 19th of November, were the real causes of the violent and passionate conduct of the English Court. By the manner in which the addresses from the democratic Societies in England were received and answered by the Convention, the KING'S PERSONAL DIGNITY was attacked and insulted. A total disregard of these indecent proceedings, so long as England had no Ambassador resident at Paris, and so long as they were unaccompanied by any overt act of enmity, would have been no less politic than magnanimous. The restoration of a regular diplomatic intercourse, and the unequivocal manifestation of those sentiments of good-will, or even of dignified neutrality, which had characterised the conduct of England in the earlier stages of the French revolution, would unquestionably have re-established, on a firm and solid basis, the relations of peace and amity between the two nations.

## SECTION

## SECTION V.

*Containing Remarks on Chapters XV and XVI.*

ON the 17th January (1793), while the dispatch of M. Le Brun was still under deliberation, M. Chauvelin tendered to Lord Grenville the Letters of Credence recently received from the Government of France. On the 18th, Lord Grenville returned his answer to the dispatch, and on the 20th he transmitted a second letter to M. Chauvelin, informing him, "that *under the present circumstances*," i. e. while a negotiation was depending between the two countries of the highest importance, and the success of which might depend upon the recognition of the Ambassador—"his Majesty does not think" proper to receive them." Is it possible to offer a better or wiser reason for this refusal than that which Mr. Fox assigned in a celebrated speech in Parliament, and which appears to have given such offence to the delicate feelings of Mr. Marsh, viz. "that the heads of the Executive Council in France had not been anointed from the holy oil cruise, before the altar of Rheims?"

Mr.

Mr. Marsh affects, indeed (vol. II. p. 304), to speak of this recognition as *a favour*, or *expression of friendship*, to which the French Republic had no claim; as if the recognition in question had been a mere matter of external decorum, instead of a high consideration of national wisdom and policy. Supposing the French nation not to be entitled to any peculiar demonstrations of favour or friendship, is there any trace of sense or reason, in a pertinacious refusal to style that a Government which we are compelled to treat as such, though it were founded in violence and usurpation? Did any of the powers of Europe reason in this manner in the case of Cromwell? Had we not affairs of great importance to transact with this Government, whether it were regular or irregular, lawful or unlawful? and could a refusal to acknowledge it as a Government answer any purpose but that of irritation? In whom, at this period, did the Government of France reside, if not in the Executive Council and Convention? And with whom did the right inseparable from a Government, as such, under whatever denomination, to nominate agents, to treat with other Governments, inhere, if not in them?—Surely not in the degraded, powerless, unfortunate Monarch! Lord Grenville certainly had not studied the science of politics

politics in the school of Grotius, who expressly says, " A prince does not stipulate for himself, " but for the people under his government; " and a King deprived of his kingdom, loses " the right of sending Ambassadors." *Grotius de Bell.*

Neither the existence or the permanence of the new Republic depended upon the recognition of the English Court, and the interests of the two countries imperiously demanded that some open and authorised mode of communication should be established between them; and those interests were in this instance manifestly sacrificed to the miserable pride and folly of court etiquette. It is true, that the feelings of Ministry might be hurt at a compliance which they had so long and so obstinately declined; but this mortification they most unnecessarily brought upon themselves.

Had the recognition of the French Republic been made in that negative form which the uninterrupted residence of Lord Gower would have implied, there would have existed no necessity for making it in a more positive manner. But our wise Ministers chose to place this question foremost upon the canvas, and to make an expressa

express and formal dispute of it. "Why," as was forcibly at the time asked, "should we use such a *disqualifying* measure against our own purposes as that of contesting to France its having an organ left wherewith to address foreign powers? Did we question the late King of Sweden's title to mix in the diplomatic circles of Europe, because he had enslaved his people? and yet, because France has deposed its king, France is not allowed to be recognised as a power, but is 'Monstrum, horrendum, informe, ingens, cui *humen* ademptum' \*."

Mr. Marsh tells us (p. 206), "that the British Ministers must necessarily have preferred the continuance of a monarchical form of government in France, to the establishment of a republic, because great republics are naturally inclined to be both restless in themselves, and to disturb the peace of their neighbours." But if we take a retrospective view of the History of France for the last 250 years, what great republic could be more restless in itself than this great monarchy for the first half of that term, or more disposed to disturb the

\* *Comments on the proposed War with France*, p. 100.

peace

peace of her neighbours than she has most notoriously been for the latter part of it?

“ The inhabitants of France, however,” according to Mr. Marsh, p. 207, “ having at length discovered that they are fighting in support of tyranny, and not of liberty, the same military enthusiasm cannot be expected to characterise them in future.” To this reflection the victories of the present campaign, and the wide extent of Gallic conquests, from the Po to the Danube, have already afforded a very decisive answer.

M. Brissot, in his report to the Convention on the 12th January, speaking of the British Ministers, uses the expression, “ Ils prévoyaient que cette république pouvait se consolider, et porter le flambeau des révolutions en toute l’Europe.” For this foresight, Mr. Marsh ascribes to these deep politicians great honour, and declares it “ to have been undoubtedly their duty to avoid a step (viz. the recognition of the republic) which would have given additional force to the engine of destruction.” But this reasoning is very futile. All men of penetration, whether friendly or adverse to the French revolution in its commencement, saw in its pro-

gress

grew the danger to which Europe was exposed by the bursting of this great political volcano. Had the English Ministers, then, been grave and considerate statesmen, they would have carefully avoided feeding this flaming mountain with fresh combustibles; and if it were not by mortal art to be extinguished, at least to stand at a safe distance and suffer it unmolested to burn out. The recognition in question, to drop all metaphor, could add nothing to the political force of France; but the pernicious and haughty refusal of such recognition might, and did, add to the force of her passions and the strength of her resentment; which was, in fact, "contributing voluntarily to the energy of a power which," according to Mr. M. "had already declared itself hostile."

Mr. Pitt, in his famous speech of February 3d, 1800, has indeed thought fit, in vindication of this refusal, to lay a very great stress upon the example of Count Bernstorff, by general acknowledgement, if this may be said without giving offence to Mr. Pitt, the wisest Minister in Europe. But no two cases can be more dissimilar. Denmark is a secondary power, which must, in a certain degree, regulate its own conduct by that of its more potent neighbours. Yet in these circumstances, Baron

Baron Blohm, the Danish Ambassador at Paris, in August 1792, did not immediately retire from the French territory, in consequence of the events of the 10th of that month. In these circumstances, Denmark kept up a regular and amicable intercourse with France. In these circumstances, M. Grouvelle was received with facility and good-will, as the authorised agent of France; and, as soon as the new French constitution was established, as the accredited Minister of the Republic. But the different spirit and temper with which even the same actions are performed, will produce the most opposite effects.

Great Britain is a primary power in Europe. Her councils have never been influenced by the dread of incurring the displeasure of other powers. It is for her to set, not to follow examples. From no other motive than ill-will to France, on the deposition of the King, the British Ministry recalled their own Ambassador; and persisted, in very critical circumstances, most vindictively and contemptuously to refuse all recognition of M. Chauvelin as the Ambassador of France. A negotiation of great moment depending between the two nations, she in the same breath reproached M. Chauvelin for not being an accredited minister, and rejected the credentials

which

which he offered : and this Minister, after suffering a series of indignities and insults, was at length ordered to depart the kingdom in eight days. This, according to the second article of the Treaty of 1786, which the Court of London acknowledged to be still in force, was equivalent to a Declaration of War on the part of England ; and a Counter-declaration was immediately published on the part of France.

As Mr. Pitt seemed eager to draw the parallel, in this instance, between himself and the Count de Bernstorff, it would be well if he would contemplate with attention the political character of that great statesman throughout ; and then apply, with impartiality, the touchstone to his own conduct. Of Count Bernstorff it has been truly and nobly said, that he punctually fulfilled the promises he made, and uniformly adhered to the principles which raised him to power. His great and leading ambition was to improve and meliorate the constitution of his country and the condition of his countrymen ; and he sedulously laboured to preserve Denmark in peace with all foreign powers. As he detested wars abroad, he never employed either spies or informers at home. He administered justice in mercy ; and while he added to the liberties, he diminished as much as possible the burdens

burdens of his his fellow-subjects. His benevolent and comprehensive mind rose far superior to all distinctions of sect and party; and in return, all sects and parties, or in other words all Denmark, joined in their admiration and applause of him while living, and in lamenting their unspeakable loss when this friend and ornament of human nature ceased to exist; knowing that he existed only for the good of his country and of mankind. Mr. Pitt never having made the experiment, has no conception what the spirit of conciliation combined with the spirit of wisdom is able to effect.

No sooner was this final and peremptory refusal to recognise the Republic, in the person of its Ambassador, known at Paris, than an order of recall was transmitted to M. Chauvelin, by the Executive Council. And on the succeeding day, January 24th, upon the intelligence of the death of the King of France (January 21st), M. Chauvelin received an order to depart the kingdom within eight days. But Mr. M. by a miserable cavil, maintains that the British Government did not dismiss a French Ambassador, because M. Chauvelin had only been accredited by Louis XVI. who was now no more; and his credentials ceased from that time to be valid.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding the final rejection of the new letters of credence, and the consequent recall of the Ambassador by the Executive Council, the French Government had the merit, beyond any reasonable expectation, of making another effort for peace.

On the 26th of January, three days after the recall of M. Chauvelin, M. Maret, the confidential agent approved by Mr. Pitt, was dispatched by the Council to London, with new instructions. But no sooner was he landed at Dover, than he was informed of the hostile dismissal of Chauvelin—whom he met on the road—by the English Court. He immediately wrote to M. Le Brun for fresh orders, and proceeded to the metropolis. In the actual circumstances of the case, not deeming himself empowered to demand an interview, or to make any direct overture, he contented himself with sending a short note to Lord Grenville, informing him that he had come over to take charge of the diplomatic papers in the house of the French Envoy. Of this his Lordship took not the least notice. M. Maret remained, therefore, incognito in London, till the intelligence arrived of the French Declaration of War; when he sent a second letter to Lord Grenville, to take leave, and returned to Paris.

What

What the original instructions of M. Maret were, yet remain a secret: it is, however, universally, and upon the best grounds, believed that the concessions he was empowered to make were very great. And Mr. Miles, a gentleman of great veracity and respectability, personally acquainted both with M. Maret, and M. Le Brun, and who has published an interesting account of these transactions, though his political sentiments are much in favour of Ministers, expressly says, "The propositions which the Executive Council had authorised M. Maret to offer, and which would have been offered if M. Chauvelin had not left London, but which I am not at liberty to reveal, were so different from the imperious language which M. Le Brun had lately assumed, and the concessions were so much greater than it was reasonable to suppose would have been made after what had passed, that I doubted the sincerity of them at the time."

Such is the naked fact, and as to the matter of opinion whether the language of M. Le Brun or of Lord Grenville were best characterised by the epithet imperious, the world will judge.

On the 25th of January, copies of the papers which had passed between Lord Grenville and M. Chauvelin

Chauvelin were laid before the States General by Lord Auckland, accompanied with a memorial of such a nature that all the collections of diplomatic papers ever published may be safely challenged to furnish any thing similar to it. Under the veil and pretence of being an official document, it contained a most furious and rancorous invective against the French Revolution and its authors; discovering a strange and total disregard to the dignity and decorum of the character and station of an Ambassador. In this lunatic State Paper, the terms "wretches," "villany," "atrocity," "infamous," &c. were used with as little reserve as if authorised by diplomatic prescription.

What is truly astonishing after all this, is, that an overture on the part of General Dumouriez to Lord Auckland, proposing a conference with his lordship at some place near the borders, was received by this Minister, as M. Dumouriez tells us, with the greatest pleasure, and he instantly, with the approbation of General Dumouriez, communicated the proposition to the Grand Pensionary, Van Spiegel, who likewise consented to take part in the conference. His Lordship also dispatched no less than three packet-boats to England to obtain the consent of his Court, and instructions relative to the conference. He said, "that  
"the

the answer would soon arrive, and that it "was  
 " by no means his design to amuse the General,  
 " or to delay his plans or preparations for the  
 " next campaign." It was decided that as soon  
 as Lord Auckland received the answer from his  
 Court, that the conference should be held at the  
 Moerdyke, on board a Yacht of the Prince of  
 Orange. During the residence of M. Maret in  
 London, the British Government received intel-  
 ligence from Lord Auckland of the proposition of  
 Dumouriez, who himself represents Maret as a  
 person sent to pave the way for his reception—  
 " On envoie," says the General, in a letter to  
 Miranda, " un agent secret fort connu de M. Pitt  
 " pour demander un sauf conduit pour moi, et  
 " l'assurance d'être bien venu," &c. And, in his  
 Memoirs, he tells us, " Il fut décidé que Maret,  
 " qui avait déjà fait plusieurs voyages en Angle-  
 " terre, y ferait renvoyé pour favorir de M. Pitt  
 " si réellement il souhaitait traiter personnellement  
 " avec le Général Dumouriez." Tom 1. p. 121.  
 It appears, however, that the commission entrusted  
 to M. Maret was of a more general and extensive  
 nature than the vanity of Dumouriez suffered him  
 to suspect.

The English Government consented with the  
 utmost facility to the proposed conference at the

Moerdyke, and formally authorised Lord Auckland to treat with Dumouriez. On the receipt of his instructions, Lord Auckland dispatched a courier to the General, who was then at Antwerp, and proposed the 10th February for holding the first conference; but this design was altogether superseded by the declaration of war on the part of France against Great Britain and Holland, on the 1st of that month.

It must not be omitted, that General Dumouriez himself informs us (Mem. vol. I. p. 128), "that De Maulde, a confidential agent of the Executive Council at the Hague, had been assured by Lord Auckland, that the British Cabinet would have no objection to negotiate with General Dumouriez;" and likewise, "that Mr. Pitt himself had made a declaration to the same purpose." And it appears, that not only the overture of Dumouriez was founded upon this basis, but that he entertained strong suspicions of an insidious design on the part of the English Government. "On pourrait croire," says he, "que le Ministre Pitt n'aurait voulu qu'amuser le General Dumouriez." In this conjecture, however, Dumouriez was probably mistaken. Pitt himself certainly wished for peace; but he had not energy of mind to stem the torrent

torrent of opinion, which, since the extraordinary measures of alarm adopted by the Government, had run violently for war. The collective determinations of the Cabinet were the manifest result of passion and folly, and the Ministers who then guided, and who still guide, the counsels of the state, stand charged before God and their country for precipitating the nation into a destructive and ruinous contest, which has often been asserted, but has never yet been proved, to be either just or necessary.

#### SECTION VI.

##### *Conclusion.*

As, in the grand historic picture of the eventful times in which we live, the character of Mr. Pitt must ever stand prominent on the canvas, it must be a question of more than historic curiosity, to ascertain what that character really is. It has been drawn with strokes so masterly, and in a style so peculiarly felicitous, by a certain writer, in a tract published a few years since\*, that no other apology will be necessary for the freedom of transcribing it on the present occasion, as expressing

\* "Enquiry into the Merits of Mr. Pitt's Administration," by Charles Faulkner, esq.

the sentiments of thousands, once his partial advocates, with the utmost precision and fidelity.

This able writer observes, " that considering the rank which Great Britain holds, and which it is to be hoped she will ever hold, in the scale of nations, it must, at all times, be a subject of more importance than can immediately be calculated, both to ourselves and others, whether our councils are directed by a real statesman, whose temperate and perspicuous wisdom may protect and advance the interests of his fellow-creatures; or are governed by some plausible orator, the measures of whose rash and puzzled administration may extend to a degree unprecedented, and, perhaps, perpetuate the miseries of mankind, and the degradation of the human race.

" By the establishment of a Sinking Fund, Mr. Pitt has, indeed, deserved, and he has very amply received, the approbation of his countrymen. It may with truth be affirmed, that by this single measure he has done more to promote their happiness, than by all the flowing declamations he has ever uttered. Yet must this praise be given with the most considerable qualifications and abatements. His conduct, even on this occasion, is incumbered with that passion

" for

" for popularity, which has so often persuaded  
 " him to suffer the public to be, in fact, de-  
 " ceived; and with that poverty of spirit, which  
 " seems never to allow him to act without disguise.  
 " The surplus of a million should have been se-  
 " cured by taxes, as Dr. Price originally recom-  
 " mended; but our Minister chose to see his mea-  
 " sure maimed and crippled in its operation, and  
 " rendered almost wholly inefficient, rather than  
 " run the risk of a trifling diminution of his popu-  
 " larity, by the imposition of a burthen on the  
 " country, which would, in this case alone, have  
 " been salutary, and calculated for their relief.

" Yet, with his own ability and virtue, was Mr.  
 " Pitt so completely enraptured, that he expressed  
 " a hope, in the House of Commons, " that he  
 " should have his name inscribed on a pillar to  
 " public credit, as its preserver and restorer."  
 " There can be no doubt that the attention of  
 " Mr. Pitt had been originally directed to this  
 " measure by the writings of Dr. Price. It was  
 " this intelligent philanthropist that Mr. Pitt when  
 " he came into office thought proper to summon  
 " to his assistance. Such were the obligations of  
 " the Minister, to a man whose name was to have  
 " found no place in the inscription of the pillar to  
 " national credit, while the Minister's was to be  
 " preserved

“ preserved and recorded for the admiration of  
“ ages ! \* The purity of Mr. Pitt’s motives may  
“ be left to the decision of that great tribunal,  
“ where alone they can be accurately examined ;  
“ but his ability as a Minister must be, necessarily,  
“ left to us to appreciate and decide upon : a sub-  
“ ject of fair discussion ; an object of very reason-  
“ able doubt. *Omnium consensu dignus imperio*  
“ *nisi imperasset*, is the character of one of the  
“ Roman emperors, as delineated by the historian  
“ Tacitus. Mr. Pitt might, in like manner, have  
“ been thought capable of ruling ; had he never

\* Dr. Price has been accused of giving way, too much and too easily, to the feelings of political despondency: yet his decided opinion was, that the nation, in the *existing circumstances* of the year 1786, was fully equal to the creation of a Sinking Fund of two millions; and that opinion subsequent events have abundantly verified: but Mr. Pitt's excessive timidity would consent only to the establishment of a fund of one million; and for this, as is well known, he never made any adequate provision. Dr. Price himself, the most humble and disinterested of men, declared, not without emotion, to the author of the present REMARKS, "that Mr. P., in the speech with which he introduced the Sinking-Fund Bill, never once mentioned his name, or ever deigned to take the slightest notice of him afterwards; though Mr. P. could not but know, that the Marquis of Lansdowne, that truly able statesman, to whom he himself owed his high and early advancement, and what was a still more impressive consideration, that his late father, the great Earl of Chatham, had invariably treated this virtuous and distinguished patriot with all the marks of the most cordial esteem and friendship."

"ruled."

“ ruled. The promise of his early talents has not  
 “ been fulfilled: and if we still admire, it is the  
 “ triumph of partiality over experience. For his  
 “ ability it seems impossible to contend, if we at-  
 “ tentively survey all his administration, and re-  
 “ flect, at the same time, that he has been a Mi-  
 “ nister with such advantages as no other Mini-  
 “ ster ever yet possessed. A most singular con-  
 “ currence of circumstances has, at all times,  
 “ thrown every thing into his power, and left  
 “ every thing at his devotion. Yet has he, from  
 “ the first, condescended to adopt such petty tricks,  
 “ expedients, and finesses, as his mind, if it had  
 “ been really vigorous and great, must, at all  
 “ times, have rejected with contempt.

“ In the conduct of Mr. Pitt, there is never  
 “ found that fearless simplicity, that dignified can-  
 “ dour, which are the genuine offspring of an  
 “ elevated mind, and the true criterion of real wil-  
 “ dom. It is these that incline and enable others  
 “ to meet our wishes, and accede to our propo-  
 “ sals. It is these that leave those for whom we  
 “ act nothing to complain of, and those whom we  
 “ oppose nothing to accuse. Ministers who are  
 “ actuated by these principles, have no occasion to  
 “ appeal for the propriety of their measures to the  
 “ sanction they have received from their majorities  
 “ and ”

“ in

“ in Parliament; and are under no necessity conti-  
“ nually to refuse papers and stop enquiries; for  
“ they have nothing to conceal, and they are un-  
“ willing to deceive.

“ From the first opening of the French Revo-  
“ lution to the present hour, Mr. Pitt has at no  
“ time displayed that commanding foresight which  
“ marks a superior mind, or that controlling pru-  
“ dence which we have a right to expect in him  
“ who undertakes the management of the interests  
“ of millions. At no season has he ever endeav-  
“ oured to stem the torrent of public prejudices,  
“ or to make the people calm and wise when they  
“ were inflamed and ignorant. The stream of  
“ public opinion he has always submitted patiently  
“ and diligently to watch, and to float upon its  
“ surface; not direct its course where wisdom or  
“ patriotism might suggest. The nonsense of the  
“ Test-Act, the rubbish of the Penal Laws, the  
“ corruption of our representation, in *him* find a  
“ statesman ever ready to step out in their defence  
“ and support, under the ready and impenetrable  
“ shield of existing circumstances. The mind of  
“ the nation under his auspices makes no advances;  
“ he turns its ignorance or its prejudices to his  
“ own advantage; he labours not to correct them  
“ at the hazard of his own power. No sentiment  
“ has

" has he ever uttered, to no plan has he ever ad-  
 " hered, which can be shewn to have been incon-  
 " sistent, at the time, with what he may have  
 " supposed to be his interest as a Minister. At-  
 " tachment to their situation is the universal fault  
 " —the vulgar motive of all the little Ministers  
 " that have ever disgraced the cabinets of princes:  
 " yet by this wretched principle has the conduct  
 " of Mr. Pitt been uniformly governed and di-  
 " rected. Throughout the whole of Mr. Pitt's  
 " administration, we may discern the skilful par-  
 " liamentary leader; the attentive observer of  
 " *times and seasons*; the modulator of the notes  
 " of the House of Commons: but we never be-  
 " hold the instructor of nations, or the enlightened  
 " Minister of a great people. He has eloquence,  
 " but not wisdom; a love of patronage and power,  
 " no enlarged or dignified ambition; and all the  
 " rashness and insolence of genius, without its sen-  
 " sibilities or its force.

" The inhabitants of this country have been  
 " chiefly misled in their opinion of the ability of  
 " Mr. Pitt, by too inconsiderate an admiration of  
 " his talents as an orator. Yet they should al-  
 " ways have considered, that he who is eloquent  
 " is not necessarily wise: the greatest strength of  
 " memory combined with a ready supply of glit-

" tering

" tering language, are not unfrequently united  
 " with weakness of judgment. It is the weight,  
 " not the variety, of ideas with which wisdom is  
 " concerned; she is suspicious of a multitude of  
 " words, lest she should be deceived and bewil-  
 " dered.

" Amplification is the great business of elo-  
 " quence; while the first occupation of wisdom  
 " is to reduce every thing, if possible, to its ori-  
 " ginal elements. Enthusiasm is the soul of the  
 " one; calmness the essence of the other. The  
 " one distinguishes not, examines not, hesitates  
 " not, reflects not: the other is cautious, scrupu-  
 " lous, patient, and deliberative. The reviver of  
 " American taxation, and the consequent author  
 " of the American war, was Charles Townshend,  
 " 'the delight of the House of Commons.' If we  
 " retire from the speech of Mr. Fox, our concep-  
 " tions are enlarged; we have food for contem-  
 " plation: the impressions which our judgment  
 " has received can never be obliterated. On the  
 " contrary, the speech of Mr. Pitt is a splendid  
 " vision, fading every moment from our view,  
 " and never to be recalled. There is an eloquence  
 " of the mind as well as of the tongue.

" If in any part of this picture there should ap-  
 " pear

" bear a colouring too bold, some allowance may  
 " be extended to the emotions of the artist, whose  
 " pencil might be betrayed while his mind was  
 " warmed with indignation, or hurried into disgust  
 " by the contemplation of a form which he was  
 " conscious had been long the idol, and was still  
 " the favourite, of his countrymen; while to him  
 " it appeared without beauty and without strength;  
 " with no simplicity to engage, no elegance to  
 " charm; fierce in its mien, and unnatural in its  
 " gestures; a form which spread destruction as  
 " it moved—which it was impossible to admire—  
 " which it was still more impossible to love.<sup>23</sup>

With relation to Lord Grenville, who sustains  
 the second part in the political drama, but whose  
 talents for public business appear so inadequate to  
 the exigencies of the times, it were sincerely to be  
 wished, previous to his again engaging in the ar-  
 duous task of negotiation, that he would be pleased  
 to devote some small share of his attention to the  
 writings of Sir William Temple, with the laudable  
 view of imbibing, if possible, a portion of the spi-  
 rit of that able and fortunate politician, so long  
 and so justly celebrated as the most perfect model  
 of diplomatic wisdom. In M. de Wit, Sir Wil-  
 liam Temple, indeed, met with a congenial mind;  
 and to this, and the facility of restoring a system  
 forcibly

forcibly deranged to its natural order, he attributed the wonderful success of his mission to the Hague, in 1668. But that great Minister knew how much was due to the extraordinary address of the English Ambassador. "Toute la modestie de votre raisonnement," says the Pensionary, "ne m'empêchera pas de croire que tout autre Ministre que sa Majesté Britanique eut envoyé à la Haye n'auroit pas fait en bien des mois ce que vous avez achevé en quatre jours."

Any person who reads with a discerning eye the dispatches of the Ambassador, and in particular the letters addressed to Lord Arlington of the 26th, and to the Lord Keeper Bridgeman of the 27th January 1668, will not deem the compliment strained: "C'est la parfaite confiance," says he to M. Gourville, "qui nous a reciprocquement uni M. le Pensionnaire et moi; il se loue de moi et de ma manière d'agir, qui comme vous savez est toujours franche et ouverte."

Speaking of the negotiations carrying on between the Marquis del Castel Rodrigo and the deputies of Holland, he tells us, "that when the deputies demanded an audience or a paper, if they have it not within half an hour, they say, 'Le Marquis se mocque d'eaux, et ils se trouvent obligés de l'écrire

“ l'écrire ce soir aux états, et que le Marquis ne  
 “ cherche que retardements, et par-là de les en-  
 “ gager dans la guerre.’ So that, in all their au-  
 “ diences, between the Marquis’s eloquence and  
 “ their Leyden philosophy, the cards commonly  
 “ run high, and all is *pique* and *repique* between  
 “ them: and I am to go to one and the other, next  
 “ day, to set all right again, and endeavour to  
 “ make them agree afunder upon points which  
 “ they could by no means agree upon together.”

In a letter to M. de Wit, April 17, 1668, he thus expresses himself: “ Je n’ai encore rien re-  
 “ marqué dans le cours de cette affaire dont je ne  
 “ fusse venu à bout avec vous sans le moindre  
 “ chagrin, mais même agrement. Et je ne vous  
 “ dirai point les peines et les soucis que j’ai en à  
 “ menager toutes choses entr’eux, et à prevenir  
 “ des éclats et les reparties piquantes qu’ils étoient  
 “ prêts de se faire à tout bout de champ. J’ai em-  
 “ ployé pour cela toute mon adresse, car je faisois  
 “ cette reflexion, que les dispositions, ou si vous  
 “ voulez les passions, des Ministres ont une grande  
 “ influence sur celles du maîtres.”

To Sir John Trevor, upon another occasion, he says to the same effect (Dec. 10, 1669), “ For  
 “ aught

" aight I fee, all busineses depend upon the qual-  
ties of the men that manage them."

That illustrious statesman, M. de Wit, in reply to complaints received from the English Court (Oct. 1670) relative to insults offered to the personal dignity of the king, says, in language worthy of so great a man, " Je souhaiterois que dè part et d'autre il n'eut paru des libelles, des vers, des medailles, &c. Et j'avoue volontiers qu'en ce pais l'on se donne un peu trop de license en des certaines choses. Vous, Monsieur, et ceux qui vous ressemblent, vous êtes au-dessus de ce que vous nommez bien bagatelles, et ne vous arrêtez qu'aux VÉRITABLES INTENTIONS de L'ETAT."

It must indeed be acknowledged, that the insults offered to the personal dignity of the present Monarch, by the Convention of France, were of an higher and more serious nature than those alluded to by M. de Wit; but they originated under circumstances of peculiar irritation; and proceeded evidently from resentment at the insult previously offered to them. Most unquestionably the real views of the state, " les véritables intentions de l'état," were not hostile any farther

than

than they conceived those of England to be so; and there cannot exist the slightest rational doubt but that a Temple or a de Wit would, without difficulty, have terminated the whole dispute, formidable in appearance rather than in reality, by a speedy and amicable eclaircissement.

It may be proper to observe, that the numerous animadversions of Mr. M. on the celebrated pamphlet of Mr. Erskine are passed over in silence, as being merely *argumenta ad hominem*, and therefore wholly irrelevant in discussing the real merits of the question. It must be acknowledged that this popular tract, abounding as it does with liberal and noble sentiments, is rather to be considered as an eloquent pleading, than as an exact and accurate statement of facts. There are three other publications, by three very distinguished persons on the same side; each of which in its way possesses very great and extraordinary merit. The first is Mr. Fox's ever-memorable Letter to his Constituents; the second is the admirable Address to the King, moved in the House of Commons by Mr. Grey, on the 21st Feb. 1793, and recorded on the Journals of the House; and thirdly, not inferior to either, is the tract styled, "The Question Stated, March 1798," by Mr. Francis. All of them are the evident productions of wise and able

able Statesmen, who, uninfluenced by the wild and temporary alarms, prejudices, and clamours, of the times in which they live, offer to their fellow-citizens that sound and salutary advice, which the Nation, through the artifices and misrepresentations of interested and designing men, was, and is, in a state too distempered even to attend to, and much less to follow. These excellent writings will, notwithstanding, ever remain, to adopt the language of the illustrious Earl of Chatham, in relation to his provisional bill for effecting a reconciliation with America, "monuments of their earnest, how-  
ever ineffectual, endeavours to serve their country."

A few concluding remarks may be of use, as a general recapitulary statement and summary of facts.

Mr. Pitt came into office, supported by the voice of the Nation, actuated on the one hand, by recent resentment, originating in a combination of ill-starred accidents, against a Statesman of the highest talents, of long experience, of unbounded philanthropy, guided by the profoundest political sagacity; and on the other, by the too sanguine and romantic hope which he indulged of a young, artful, and aspiring rival; an Octavius in politics, who

who eagerly sought for occasions to advance himself, without passing through the necessary gradations of office, to the first dignities of the state. Early instructed, however, in the true principles of political wisdom, and connected from his first entrance into public life with persons distinguished for understanding and liberality, he governed for three years with prudence and reputation. But at the end of this term one of those critical questions occurred which in the course of years will occasionally arise, requiring not art and plausibility merely, but resolution and penetration to decide upon. This was the question respecting the repeal of the Test Laws. By arguing in defence of the equity and expediency of these justly obnoxious statutes, he deserted one of the clearest and most sacred principles of whiggism. Such a question might surely have been left to take its chance in the House of Commons, without having to encounter the eloquence of a Minister, who set out in life as an advocate of liberal reform. Had the slightest countenance been given by the Court to the motion of Mr. Beaufoy, it would unquestionably have passed without difficulty. The Parliament and Nation were ripe for this measure of policy and justice, but Mr. Pitt employed his influence to counteract it. Such a measure as this would have led the way to other liberal and

rational reforms in their proper gradation, and as the country became sufficiently enlightened to approve, or at least to endure them: and these reforms, the good effects of which if judiciously conducted must have been immediately apparent, would have effectually precluded all subsequent attempts to diffuse the spirit of discontent and disaffection. This great point being conceded by Mr. Pitt to the Tory and High-church party in the Cabinet, he necessarily lost the confidence and esteem of the most intelligent and liberal persons in the community, who discerned in this acquiescence infinite attendant and consequent mischief. From step to step, Mr. Pitt has completely abandoned his original principles of whiggism; and has at length become the greatest and most dangerous enemy of liberty that this Nation ever knew.

In the same spirit of pusillanimous acquiescence to his Tory co-adjutors, after refusing to accede to the overtures of amity and alliance, and to the request of mediation made by France at different times, he *consented* at least to the recall of Lord Gower from Paris, at a time when the presence of an Ambassador was more necessary than at any period since the commencement of diplomatic intercourse between the two Nations.

He

He went the farther step of refusing, in common with the rest of the Cabinet, all recognition of the Ambassador of France in England. He joined his colleagues in exciting a false and insidious alarm, for the purpose of enabling the Court of London to avenge itself of the insults offered to the person of the King, in the tumultuous meetings of the Convention: the folly and madness of whose proceedings would have furnished a real Statesman with an additional and powerful motive for coolness and moderation. He gave his countenance at least to the senseless and insufferable insolence and arrogance of Lord Grenville's letters to M. Chauvelin; and the temperate and liberal advances of the French Executive Council were repulsed with ineffable contempt. As the summit of human folly, M. Chauvelin was at length ordered to depart the kingdom in eight days, though the death of the King of France was an event which it no more importeth Great Britain to revenge than the assassination of Kouli Khan; and though a war could not but be the immediate result of such a step.

In consequence of this unjust and unnecessary war, into which the Nation was, against all rules of political wisdom, precipitated, by the pride and rashness of Ministers, these kingdoms have been involved

olved in dangers and difficulties greater and more alarming than she ever before experienced. She has been reduced to combat, not merely in her own defence, but for her very existence. ~~but let~~  
 Such outrages have been offered, and such depredations made upon the Constitution of the country, that it may be said to be expiring under the wounds it has received in the house of its pretended friends. And a system of taxation has been established which resembles rather the indiscriminate pillage and plunder of an hostile invader, than the voluntary contribution of a free and generous people.

We have seen on one side of the Channel which divides the British Islands our fellow-subjects exasperated into rebellion, and perishing under the edge of the sword: and on the other, terrified into universal submission, and in the silence of despair starving with hunger; while placemen, contractors, loan jobbers, and the host of locusts which prey upon the vitals of the land, are accumulating out of the deep distresses of the people stupendous fortunes—from the bowers of pleasure and of opulence surveying with frigid indifference the surrounding abodes of misery; and with unblushing effrontery proclaiming amidst their abominable revels,

revels, masques, and orgies, that the WAR is HOLY,  
JUST, and NECESSARY.

The name of Mr. Pitt will be immortalised in history, as the man who has added more to the burdens, and subtracted more from the liberties of the subject, than all the statesmen who have preceded him in office since the Revolution. No Minister ever challenged the confidence of the country with such haughtiness; and no Minister ever so completely forfeited all rational pretension to that confidence he so prematurely and proudly claimed.

*T. Davison,  
White Friar.*

**FIN-LESS** / stony English